



**AUTHORS PRESS**  
PUBLISHERS OF SCHOLARLY BOOKS  
New Delhi (India)



(3 Vols. Set) Rs. 2450

Collected Articles of  
Padmabhushan Prof. J. P. Naik

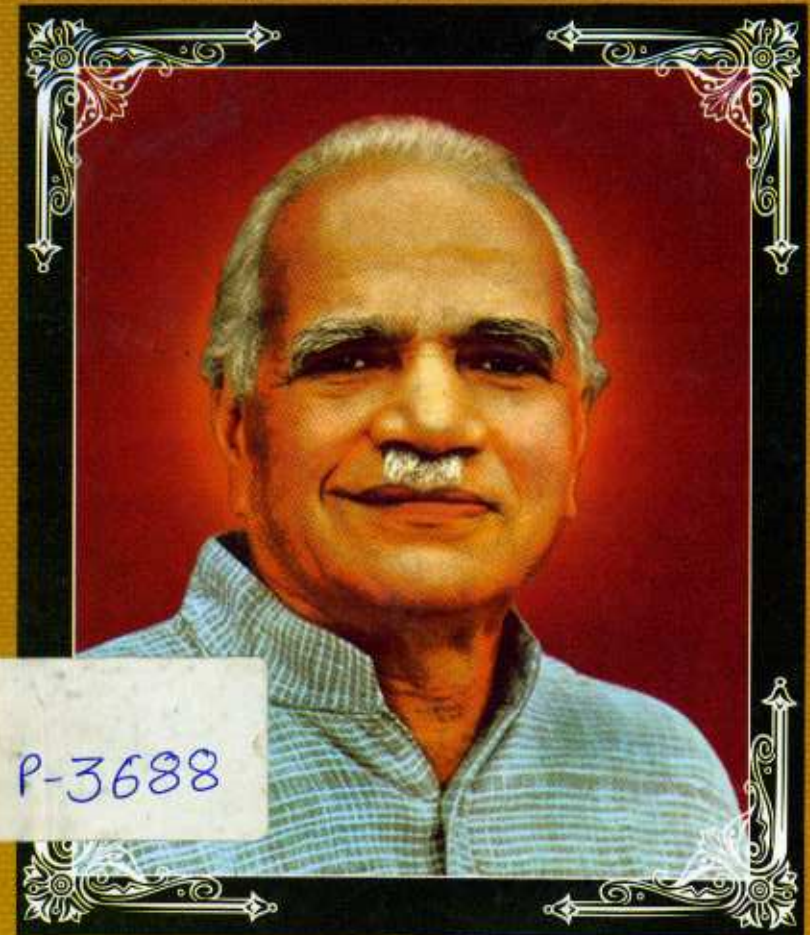
Dr. Yeshwant R. Waghmare  
Dr. A. Sai Babu



1

# Collected Articles of Padmabhushan Prof. J. P. Naik

Volume 1  
Education and Development



Dr. Yeshwant R. Waghmare  
Dr. A. Sai Babu

**Collected Articles of  
Padmabhushan  
Prof J. P. Naik**

**Volume I  
Education and Development**

Collected Articles of  
Padmabhushan  
**Prof J. P. Naik**

Volume I  
Education and Development

Yeshwant R. Waghmare  
&  
A. Sai Babu



**AUTHORSPRESS**

*in Association with*

**Indian Institute of Education**

Pune-411038, India

Worldwide Circulation through Authorspress Global Network  
First Published 2008

by  
Authorspress  
E-35/103, Jawahar Park  
Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092  
e-mail: authorspress@yahoo.com

*Collected Articles of Padmabhushan Prof J.P. Naik (Three volume*  
ISBN 978-81-7273-470-1

Printed in India at Tarun Offset, Delhi.

---

---

## Dedication

---

Dear Dr. Chitra Naik,

We, all the members of Indian Institute of Education, and other well-wishers, happily dedicate to you these three volumes of 'Collected Articles of Prof. J.P.Naik'.

You have been the guiding force for all the academic activities of Indian Institute of Education. You have been a friend, philosopher and guide to all its members. You are the source of continuous energy for all of us. At ninety-plus you have the drive to stitch and remedy the ills and shortcomings of our country's social fabric. Encouragement given by you to all the underprivileged, from time to time, has added purpose to their lives and made them confident. For the young you are the motivator, and for the seniors you are the source of inspiration. All the scholars in the field of education, the world over, respect you.

Let your blessings be with us always to do the best for society.

**Editors**



---

---

## Foreword

---

Prof. J.P.Naik was the most outstanding educator in India's post freedom era. He was born on September 5, 1907. He worked in various capacities at the national level and strived hard to bring about radical change in the Indian educational system. He wanted to transform the educational system to cater to the developmental needs of the newly born nation. The Indian Institute of Education which was set up by Prof. Naik in the year 1948 and shifted to Pune in 1976 decided to observe the period of September 5, 2006-2008 to commemorate his birth centenary. Several programmes were organised during this period, such as the Release of Postage Stamp by Prime Minister in honour and memory of Prof. J.P.Naik, seminars, discussion forums, four issues of a Marathi journal, biographical sketch of Prof. Naik, a documentary, two volumes in Marathi of Prof. Naik's articles on various aspects of education, his biography in Marathi, etc. It was also felt that compilation of the 'Collected Articles of Prof. J.P.Naik' be published as a part of the centenary programme. We are extremely happy and grateful to Prof. Y.R.Waghmare and Dr. A.S.Babu for helping the Institute to bring out three volumes covering writings and speeches delivered by this national and internationally distinguished educator in his life time.

Although nearly twenty seven years have passed since Prof. J.P.Naik's demise and the country has taken many steps forward in the field of education, the thoughts and plans of Prof. Naik still continue to be relevant. Our country and the developing societies worldwide needs visionaries like Prof. Naik particularly when educational systems have to cope with the globalisation of education.

We hope that these volumes will be useful to the education community not only of our country but others also.

***Dr. S.R.Gowarikar***

Chairman, J.P.Naik Birth Centenary Committee

Indian Institute of Education

128/2 J.P.Naik Road

Pune -411 038

**Special Pages**

---

## **J.P. Naik: Rebel, Scholar and Administrator**

---

J. P. Naik, known simply as 'J.P.' to his friends and associates, was born on 5 September 1907 in the small village of Bahirewadi, insignificantly situated in a backward corner of Kolhapur District in Maharashtra. His family was large and poor. His environment was rural, of which poverty and social inequalities were the chief attributes. Its impact on his mind was so deep that it permeated all his basic interests and became the persistent focus of his activities. Whichever field he turned to, his rural bias forcefully rose to the surface.

### **EDUCATION (1912-29)**

Naik began to earn his keep at the age of five by tending cattle and working on farm jobs along with other children of his age. At the rather late age of seven, he entered the village primary school which had classes I-IV and was the only educational institution which served the village. But he learnt in about two years all that the school had to teach and returned to the earlier task of agricultural labour and tending cattle. The happy accident of his sister's marriage into a family in Bail-Hongal, a small town near Belgum, suddenly changed Naik's destiny. His brother in law, an affectionate man, got him to attend the secondary school at Bail-Hongal (which lead classes I -III) and later sent him to Belgum where he could finish middle school education (classes IV -VII).

At Bail-Hongal the medium of instruction was not his mother tongue, Marathi, but Kannada which he mastered quickly and maintained his first position at school. He had an equally good

career in the secondary school in Belgaum, from where he matriculated in 1924. He joined the Karnatak College, Dharwar, where he passed through a socially and economically disastrous period and so transferred himself to Rajaram College, Kolhapur, from where he took his B.A. degree in Mathematics (1929). Throughout his educational career, Naik was known for three things : his voracious reading, not only of books on the subjects in the curriculum but also of those which had little to do with it; helping other students in their studies, occasionally to support himself, but mainly for the fun of teaching and the joy in helping the less advanced students; and his extremely versatile interests which included such diverse fields as Mathematics, History, Sanskrit, English Literature and the social sciences. His college contemporaries often tell juicy little anecdotes about how Naik, professedly a student of mathematics, conducted B.A. classes in English literature while he himself was reading in the Inter Arts, and the attendance far surpassed what the regular professor of the subject ever hoped to attract. Extremely energetic, rebellious, sharp wined, endowed with a keen sense of humour, bubbling with geniality, writing and reciting poetry, he became a great favourite with his classmates and even with some perceptive professors.

#### THE FORMATIVE YEARS (1930-37)

In 1930, the restless young Naik gave up his newly landed job on the staff of Rajaram College in order to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was arrested and interned in the Bellary jail for more than a year. For him this was a valuable period of introspection and planning the future. He decided to devote the rest of his life to the education and service of the rural people. He got a chance to work as Chief Orderly in the jail hospital and studied medicine in a very practical way. For Naik, this constituted an additional advantage of his incarceration and along with education, health became his other and equally important interest. Until the end, these twin interests continued to propel his work.\*

It may be mentioned here that his original name was V.H. Ghotge. He adopted the pseudonym, J.P. Naik, while doing underground work in the Civil Disobedience Movement. It stuck to him in jail; and when he came out, he found it more convenient to continue with it, especially as it marked a break with the past and indicated the beginning of a new career. So, he had this change confirmed officially.

On coming out of jail in 1932, he went to the village of Uppin Betigeri in Dharwar district where he engaged himself in teaching in a primary school, conducting a dispensary, and promoting Khadi work. During this period, he started adult education classes and guided the villagers in organising activities for improving their socio-economic conditions. The villagers gladly supported him, each house taking its turn to give him one meal of *jowar bhakri* and a bowl of curds. For his other needs, which were extremely few, they took out a collection of about Rs. 5/- (five) per month. Naik used to describe this as one of the happiest and most formative periods of his life because it was during this period that he acquired a real insight into the Indian society and its problems. The pioneering character of his work and his outstanding achievements won him the Sir Fredrick Sykes Village Improvement Shield for Uppin Betigeri in 1937.

#### NON OFFICIAL WORKER AT THE STATE LEVEL (1937-40)

A new direction to his life opened out when the first Congress Government was formed in the old Bombay State in 1937 with the late Mr. B. G. Kher as Chief Minister and Mr. Morarji Desai as Revenue Minister. He was invited to be a member of the State Boards of Primary and Adult Education and to help the new Government to develop innovative programmes of educational development. Thus began his career as a non-official educationist at the State level. His achievements in the field of primary and adult education between 1937 and 1940 are regarded as outstanding and by themselves form a landmark in the history of education. It was also during this period that he came in contact with and became a friend and a close associate of leading non officials like D. R. Gadgil (and later his two colleagues N. V. Sovani and V. M. Dandekar), R. V. Parulekar, S. R. Bhagwat, M. V. Donde, R. D. Choksi, Godavari Parulekar and M. R. Paranjape. He also developed close working relations with many senior officers of the Bombay Education Department like D. C. Pavate, Syed Nurullah, L. R. Desai, N. R. Trivedi, S. R. Tawde, Sulabha Panandikar, S. S. Bhandarkar and others. Eventually some of these became his lifelong friends and gave him assistance and encouragement to develop his ideas and programmes. During this period, he established the Dharwar Prathamik Shikshana Mandal



which conducted about 30 primary schools in the neglected and backward areas of Dharwar Taluka. In course of time, these schools were handed over to the District School Board for maintenance.

#### THE KOLHAPUR DAYS (1940-47)

Another phase of hectic and extremely significant activity began in Naik's career in 1940. Rao Bahadur P. C. Patil, who was then Education Minister of the princely state of Kolhapur, invited him to assist in the educational reconstruction of the State which had been placed under the administration of a Regency Council after the death of its ruler, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj. Naik started his work as a part time educational adviser but soon rose to the position of Development Secretary. He became an official and administrator of an unusual type who took no salary but worked for about eighteen hours a day. Taking a comprehensive view of education and development, he reorganised not only educational services but modernised the entire administration of the state and launched several programmes for improving communications, water supply, industry, agriculture, irrigation, power, health, cultural life and practically everything that concerned human welfare within the state, thus more than anticipating the Community Development programmes which were to take shape in the country after Independence. On this vast canvas of activities, what stood out most strikingly, was his extremely imaginative work in the planning and improvement of the city of Kolhapur, the organisation of a novel but simple scheme of village medical aid which anticipates the bare-foot doctor concept, and his formulation of a fifteen-year development plan for the state of Kolhapur which was the first and probably the only attempt of the type in those days. In Kolhapur, Naik acquired another set of devoted friends who worked with him closely and helped him unreservedly. These included Rao Bahadur P. C. Path, E. W. Perry and Sir Thomas Austin who were Prime Ministers of the State, N. V. (Baburao) Joshi, D. S. Mane and above all, Prabhakarpanth Korgaonkar. This very fruitful period, however, ended in 1947 when the Regency administration was dissolved. The new Maharaja who came into power decided to terminate Naik's

services for reasons of his own which ironically enough, he chose to state as 'laziness' and 'dereliction of duty'!

#### INDIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (1948-59)

Released from administrative burdens, Naik became a life worker of the Korgaonkar Trust in Kolhapur which he continued till the end. In 1948, he shifted to Bombay where, in collaboration with R. V. Parulekar, T. K. N. Menon, V. V. Kamat, A. R. Dawood, N. P. Samant and C. D. Barfivalla, he established the Indian Institute of Education. It was then, and still continues to be, the only institution of its type in the country. It proved extremely useful in stimulating post graduate and research work in education in Bombay State and brought out several valuable publications. Naik, however, was not content with only Bombay based educational activities. The pull of the rural areas led him to establish Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth, a rural institute, at Gargoti in Kolhapur District. Here he had the benefit of working with Acharya S. J. Bhagwat who greatly influenced his ideas not only of educational reconstruction but of social development as well. It was also during this period that he met Dr. Chitra Naik (1948) and later married her (1955). She brought peace, mellowness, and stability in his life, changed it almost totally in all respects and improved both the range and quality of his work beyond recognition.

#### UNION MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1959-73)

The next phase of his life again made him an official and administrator when, in 1959, the late Dr. K. G. Saiyidain who was then Education Secretary with the Government of India and Dr. K. L. Shrimali, then Union Education Minister, invited him to Delhi. After a good deal of hesitation, he accepted the invitation. He was not sure what he would achieve but he was determined that he would continue his chosen style of life and would not allow himself to be corrupted by the influence of the capital. Throughout his career in Delhi, therefore, Naik had refused to accept a salary and maintained himself on his small earnings from lectures, books and other writings. He first worked as Adviser (Primary Education) and then in several other capacities till he

became Member Secretary of the Education Commission (1964-66). He re-joined the Ministry as Adviser in 1966 and retired from active responsibilities in 1973. However, he continued to be Member-Secretary of the Central Advisory Board of Education and assisted the Ministry in the development of several programmes. He had the rare opportunity of working with nine Education Ministers: K. L. Shrimali, Humayun Kabir, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, M. C. Chagla, Triguna Sen, V. K. R. V. Rao, Siddharth Shankar Ray, Nurul Hasan and Pratap C. Chunder. As his good fortune would have it, all these Ministers trusted him and gave him full support. His work in Delhi brought him the opportunity to work with the State Governments to many of whom he became a formal or informal adviser. This period also marked his close association with the Planning Commission and especially with its successive Deputy Chairmen and members in charge of education. Naik's work assumed a national scope and character and his circle of friends widened in proportion. It included leading educationists and thinkers in all parts of the country, State Education Ministers, Secretaries and Directors of Education, and top ranking officials of the Central Government. Dr. D. S. Kothari who was Chairman of the Indian Education Commission considerably influenced Naik's thinking. Naik used to mention this gratefully. During this period, he had an opportunity to work with G. Parthasarathi, B. D. Nag Choudhury and Moonis Raza in building up the Jawaharlal Nehru University. He looked upon all these friendships with particular pride.

#### THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH (1967-78)

Concurrently with the work he was doing for the Ministry of Education, Naik had the unique opportunity to work as Chief Executive of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, an autonomous organisation of a national status. In November 1967, he was requested to implement the report of the V. K. R. V. Rao Committee on Social Science Research. Going through all the preliminary paces he was able to have the Indian Council of Social Science Research established in February 1969. He was then requested to become its first Member Secretary. He agreed to do so on a provisional basis till the Council was in a position to find someone else for the post. Due to various reasons beyond his

control, this short term assignment got prolonged year after year. But in 1977, he firmly informed the Council that he would in no case continue in the post beyond 31 March 1978 and the Council finally agreed to release him. The manner in which he built up the Council during its infant years is one of the finest tributes to Naik's commitment to scholarship, creative research and his vision about the future. Naik claimed that his nine years in the Council were of immense value for his personal development. During this period, he had the privilege of working under three distinguished chairmen, viz., Professor D. R. Gadgil, Professor M. S. Gore and Professor Rajni Kothari. He also had the opportunity to work with valued friends like Professor M. L. Dantwala, Professor D. T. Lakdawala, Professor M. N. Srinivas, Professor S. C. Dube, Professor K. N. Raj, Professor S. Chakravarty, Professor Ravi Matthai, Dr. Kamla Chowdhury, Professor V. S. Vyas, Professor Durganand Sinha and others.

#### THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (1978-81)

On retirement from the position of Member Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research in 1978, Naik turned his attention once again to the development of the Indian Institute of Education which he described as a dream that had floated into his vision in 1948 but still had to unfold itself fully. The re entry of Naik into the revival of the Institute transformed not only its original objectives but its total style of working. It became a significant innovation in institution building for achieving the goals of education for a modernising society. He visualised that in its new shape, "the major concern of the Institute will be to relate education meaningfully to the life, needs and aspirations of the people, to unravel the links between education and development, to promote the study of science and technology and especially the spread of science among the people and the cultivation of a rational, scientific temper, to create greater equality of educational opportunity, to increase the access of the underprivileged groups to education, and to use it as an instrument for making them aware of themselves and of the social reality around them, and helping them to organise themselves with a view to solving their day to day problems and improving their standard of living." To achieve this purpose, the Institute

was guided by him to lay special emphasis on working outside the formal educational system partly to educate public opinion and partly to bring pressure on the system as well as on working with progressive elements within 'the system in order to promote significant innovations and experimentation in education interrelated with development. He outlined a Five Year Plan for the Institute (1978-83), giving high priority to programmes of finding alternatives in educational development and building up collaborative resources throughout the country as well as linkages abroad, to the extent possible, and combining the efforts of a large number of intellectuals and social workers in this challenging enterprise. With his robust health and tremendous mental energy which often put to shame many of his juniors, he was confident of building up this pulsating dream to a self sustaining level within a span of five years. After this was done, he thought he could turn to his other favourite dream, that of stepping into the villages once again to recapture the joy of being a free lance planner and reformer, even as he had been in his youthful days at Uppin Betigeri. When he contracted cancer in December 1980, he trimmed down the dreams. Still, he had hoped for a year or too of remission in which he would struggle to achieve the major substance of the first drama.

#### WRITINGS

Naik was a fine scholar and at the same time a humanist. His compulsive concern for the education of the poor stimulated most of his writings on education. Universalisation of elementary education, therefore, was his main theme on which variations were constructed from the viewpoint of the historian, planner, administrator, researcher and a sensitive social worker fired with a missionary zeal, all of whom made up the curious amalgam that constituted Naik's personality. When he delivered a lecture on elementary education his statistics were impeccable and planning proposals most rational, but the tears that welled up in his eyes when he talked of the deprivation of the poor, humanised the disciplined scholar within him. His writings invariably reflect the same characteristics.. He drew naturally on his personal experience of having belonged to the rural poor and having worked among them as a primary and adult educator, to build

a philosophy of his own for educating them. But his theoretical formulations unfailingly resulted into practical propositions like multipoint entry and part time non formal education relevant to the learner's circumstances. In 1942, his first book on the subject, *Studies in Primary Education*, put forward a programme which would have, in his opinion; enabled the country to provide universal primary education for all children in about ten years. He elaborated this thought in several subsequent publications and particularly in *Elementary Education in India: The Unfinished Business* (1963) which was written when he received the Dadabhai Naoroji Award. A further development of his ideas got expression in *Elementary Education: A Promise to Keep* (1975) and *Some Perspectives on Non formal Education* (1977) which the radical thinker Ivan Illich considers to be the best book he has so far come across on the subject.

Educational history was Naik's first love. When he started working in villages in 1932, he began hunting for original sources on the development of education in India. He was so fascinated by what he found that he decided to write a history of education in the British period. Collaborating with his friend Syed Nurullah, he wrote in 1944 the first and most comprehensive history of modern Indian education. This was revised in 1951 and has become a classic on the subject and is used all over the world. Naik also published a shorter version of this book for students which is now in the sixth edition. In spite of his pressing duties Naik persisted in his search for original sources and brought out, along with collaborators, two volumes of selections from old educational records.

Ever since he started writing on education, planning, right from the institutional to the national level, was the theme of several of his publications. Over the last two years, his predilection for planning was turning towards finding alternatives to the existing system of education. This is apparent in his several essays and particularly in *Equality, Quality and Quantity : The Elusive Triangle in Indian Education* (1976). What amazed Naik's associates was not only the innovative ideas he generated but their irrefutable statistical and research base. His original training in mathematics was absorbed into his being and the amount of statistics he could produce from memory at

appropriate times was a marvel. When he drafted the Report of the Indian Educational Commission (1964-66) his capacity to bring about the marriage of relevant statistics with appropriate ideas won him everybody's admiration.

#### COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Writings of reports was a very peculiar hobby which Naik had become addicted to as a consequence of his membership of several committees and commissions. He justified this addiction by pointing out that if new ideas could be woven into the recommendations of official committees and commissions, they stood a fair chance of becoming concrete proposals for official action. The committees he worked on were varied and numerous, beginning in 1937 with the Provincial Boards of Primary Education and Adult Education in Bombay. Some of the significant committees on which he worked were: the Kher Committee on relationship between State Governments and local bodies in relation to the administration of primary education; the National Committee on the Education of Women of which Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh was Chairman; the Primary Education Integration Committee of the old Bombay State of which he himself was Chairman; the Primary Education Commission of the Rajasthan State of which also he was Chairman; the Education Committee of the J & K State; and the First Review Committee of the NCERT. He was also, as stated already, an active member of the Central Advisory Board of Education and continued to be its Member Secretary since 1967 until his last days. The monumental report of the Indian Education Commission *Education and National Development*—which he drafted as its Member Secretary has been internationally recognised as a brilliant document.

On retirement from the Indian Council of Social Science Research in 1978, Naik joined the Indian Institute of Education as Honorary Professor. He was also the Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Institute. He had undertaken two important projects on which he was working. These were a study of "Educational Reform in India, 1921-80: An Evaluation" and proposals for "Educational Development in India (1980-200)". During 1978-80, he completed two outstanding books:

*The National Education Policy, 1947-78, and Education Commission and After* (since published).

#### INSTITUTION BUILDER

All along, Naik had been an assiduous institution builder. In every phase of his own development, he threw himself wholeheartedly into constructing structures for further development of ideas and programmes. The Dharwar Prathamik Shikshan Prasara Mandal, the Indian Institute of Education, Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research are such landmarks. In his quiet but effective way, he also assisted a large number of his friends and colleagues in establishing or developing their own institutions. But to Naik, building up individuals was even more important than building up institutions. Throughout his life, therefore, he sought out and helped young and deserving persons. The number of individuals he thus assisted has been large. He took a great joy in the fact that many of them were playing important roles in different walks of life.

#### HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Naik was a man of versatile interests. Problems of health and medical services, especially for the rural areas, were his special interest. In October 1980 he completed drafting the now famous report on the health situation in India, viz. *Health for All*. This emerged from a programme he had initiated in the ICSSR, called "Alternatives in Health". His collaborators in this task were outstanding medical men like Dr. G. Gopalan, Dr. V. Ramalingaswamy, Dr. P. N. Wahi, Dr. P. N. Chuttani, Dr. N. H. Antic, and Dr. Raj Arole. He was the first, non medical person to deliver the *Lakshmanswami Mudaliar Oration* at the All India Medical Conference held at Chandigarh in 1977. It was mainly this Oration that formed the basis for the report *Health for All*. He was a member of the Srivastava Committee which made a breakthrough in the traditional thinking on health services and of the Gopalan Committee on Drug Addiction. In collaboration with his friends from the field of health, Naik hoped to assist in the formulation of a realistic alternative policy for the development of health and medical services for the country.



## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In 1950, when UNESCO invited him to write a study of compulsory primary education in India and to participate in a regional seminar on compulsory primary education held at Bombay in 1952, Naik's activities crossed their national boundaries. In 1959, he was invited again as consultant for the development of a UNESCO plan for the provision of universal elementary education in Asia. The plan he then prepared was formally adopted at the Karachi meeting of Asian Member States held in 1960 and came to be known as the *Karachi Plan*. This was further, discussed in a subsequent meeting held in Tokyo, in 1962, where he was present as a UNESCO consultant. It was at the Karachi meeting that Naik first met Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiaiah. Soon they became friends and between 1960 and 1972 he had several opportunities of working with Dr Adiseshiaiah in UNESCO's educational programmes. The meeting of African States in Addis Ababa in 1961, when a plan for the development of African education was adopted and the meeting of the Arab States held in Beirut for a similar purpose in 1967, were important for reshaping Naik's own thinking. His outstanding contributions at such meetings won international respect for his work and he began to be invited by international bodies to participate in discussions on educational development and planning. Among these, mention may be made of the International Institute of Educational Planning, Paris, and the Dam Hammarskjold Foundation, Uppsala (Naik was a member of its international Advisory Committee). Naik was one of the few educationists in India who have had large international contacts and whose advice was often sought by international agencies and friendly foreign countries. He had many close friends in the international community. These include Professor Gunnar Myrdal, Professor Ivan Illich, Professor Mary Jean Bowman, Professor C. Arnold Anderson, Dr. Harold Howe II, Professor Mrs. Rudolph, Professor H. L. Elvin, Mr. Majid Rahnema, Mr. J. F. McDougall, Mr. Asher Deleon, Professor Cyril E. Beeby, and Professor Ian Lister. Some of these eminent personalities contributed to a rich Festschrift volume *'The Social Context of Education Essays in Honour of Professor J. P. Naik'*. The volume was prepared when Naik completed seven decades of a highly productive life. Naik was a Consultant to the

World Bank also on educational matters. He was recently invited by the Regional Office of UNESCO, Bangkok, to hold discussions with the UNESCO staff about the future of education in Asia. During his last visit (November 1980) he discussed and outlined a proposal for long term educational planning in the Asian region.

After his return from Bangkok, around December 1980, it was discovered that he had contracted cancer of the oesophagus. His health began to fail. But it could not affect his strong frame of mind or his firm determination to work, which had won him the *Padmabhushan* award from the Government of India in 1974. He was working till the end of July 1981 on his favourite projects on 'Educational Reform' and Educational Development in India (1980-2000). Naik passed away in the early hours of Sunday, 80 August 1981. He would have entered his seventy fifth year on 5 September 1981.

Those who knew Naik from his school and college days often wondered how he could bring himself to spend nearly nineteen years in Delhi which, in style and spirit, was so far removed from rural life. Naik had always been a villager through and through in food, clothes, easy *camaraderie* with the simple and the indigent and disregard of what is known as social polish and highbrow etiquette. But Delhi, though not quite to his taste, contributed much toward the widening of his intellectual interests and contacts with other creative minds. Time and again, however, he expressed his longing to return to the rural setting. He also set his heart on building up the Indian Institute of Education at Pune, which he did, and on developing his favourite theme of *Alternatives in Education and Development*. Eventually, he hoped to live and work in a village just as he did in the first flush of his youthful idealism. There, undisturbed by the city's jar, he might have once again found a sure outlet for his multipronged energies which sought to build man and his environment together into a blend where rational vision blissfully merges with the poetic, and where the simple joys of life conquer the craving for possessions and power.

Times changed and so did Naik while garnering insights and wisdom from whatever he experienced and whomsoever he met. But it was not difficult for his friends to see that, if left to himself,

he would have entered another Uppin Betigeri even after a crowded interregnum of forty eight years, mixing with the villagers, talking excitedly about plans for change, sitting on the floor of a hut regaling himself on *jowar* bread and curds, entirely unmindful of how he looked in soiled *khadi* shorts and a shirt with an irreparable rent in its back. That was the real Naik, known simply as 'J.P.' to his friends who are legion.

---

## Preface

---

It is indeed a privilege and honour for us to have been assigned the task of collating the writings and articles of the founder of various educational systems which are in vogue in India, and even abroad, Prof. J.P.Naik. Prof. Naik had recognised as early as in 1940s that India is a vast country with large population of multiple caste, class, regional and religious dimensions, and as such a single educational system would not suit it. In order to provide education for the entire population he therefore advocated various types of educational systems. However, besides education, he was also concerned with the 'health programmes' for the entire population in general, but more so for the rural population who is deprived of even the basis necessities of health care facilities. Prof. J.P.Naik was well known to educationists all over the world as an outstanding visionary, planner and organiser. He was involved in setting up various institutions such as Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA/NUEPA), Mauni Vidyapeeth, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Indian Institute of Education (IIE), and others. He was the most outstanding single individual having the greatest influence on education reforms for developing countries in general and India in particular.

Prof. Naik's early life was full of struggles. He came from a poor rural family, and would have been dragged into the rural agricultural trap; but for his intelligence, love for education, and strong desire to help people, and our country, by devising methods of appropriate systems of education for rural as well as

urban folks. He had a brilliant academic career, and loved literature as well as mathematics. It was in his early college education years that he participated actively in India's liberation movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and served a prison sentence. It was during his prison term that he gained good knowledge of medicine and medical practice, and helped the inmates. He launched the programme of 'Education for All, Health for All' and made every effort to make it successful. However, because of the circumstances prevailing then he had limited success. The eminent educationist Prof. A.R.Kamat writes about him, "In his last work, 'Education Commission and After', undertaken during the very last phase of his life, Naik frankly admits that the framework adopted in the Education Commission Report about education and development had basic weaknesses, since it did not even refer to the extreme poverty and deprivation in Indian Society, and the highly unequal distribution of earnings, wealth and political power -the fundamental problems of Indian Society, which need to be faced equally.... Naik's departure from the Indian educational scene has created a large void which cannot easily be filled. In a sense, it was the end of an epoch. It is for the on-going generations of Indian educationists to work for his idea of radical reconstruction of Indian education with a clearer perspective". It was indeed a great pleasure for one of us (ASB) to be his disciple.

'Collected Articles of Prof. J.P. Naik' has been compiled in three volumes. The first volume deals with his contributions in the fields of Primary Education, Elementary Education, Higher Education and Education for Rural Development. Volume No. II contains his contributions in the area of Policy Studies, and Volume No. III contains monographs concerning his contributions in educational development for scheduled castes and tribes, and his reflections and assessment for the future.

We are very thankful to the librarians of various institutions such as NCERT, NIEPA, ICSSR, JNU, IIE and others for providing us the necessary assistance in collecting the articles, speeches and reports for inclusion in these three volumes. One of us (ASB) is particularly grateful to Smt. Nirmal Malhotra, Librarian of NIEPA for personal help in procuring the documents from other institutions as well. Some of the documents were in the form of photocopies of articles whose originals could not be traced. Some

of the articles had to be retyped as well as scanned to minimise errors in their reproduction. We are grateful to Smt. Medha Sonsale, Smt. Hemangi Katre, Smt. Sujata Joshi and Shri Aswad Purohit for their assistance in suitably consolidating the manuscript.

We are also grateful to Dr. Ambika Jain, Director, Centre for Educational Studies (CES), and a former student of Prof. J.P.Naik, for all the assistance she provided.

We are also extremely grateful to the members of the Executive Council and the members of the Board of Trustees of Indian Institute of Education, for the confidence they showed in assigning this task to us. In particular, we are extremely grateful to Dr. Chitra Naik, Chairperson, Board of Trustees of Indian Institute of Education (IIE), and Dr. Shankarrao R. Gowarikar, Secretary General of IIE and Chairman of the J.P.Naik Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee for their continued guidance, assistance and encouragement for the completion of this project.

We specially appreciate Shri Madhukar Patil for all the assistance that he and his staff provided in the preparation of the manuscript, including getting a part of the manuscript scanned, and the necessary corrections required. The cover page of all the three volumes is also designed by Shri Patil.

Finally, on behalf of the editors as well as our Institute we express our sincere and special gratitude to Sudarshan Kcherry and Authorspress to publish these volumes in a record time.

*Editors*

---

---

## Contents

---

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Special Pages</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xxv</i>

---

### Primary Education

---

1. Provision of School Places in Class I to V (1948)	3
2. Some Problems of Single-Teacher Schools (1952)	7
3. The Village Panchayats and Primary Education	19
4. Objectives, Curricula and Methods of Teaching (1800-1937)	25
5. The Functional Primary School (1975)	37
6. A Report on the Commonwealth Conference on Non-formal Education for Development (February 1979)	51
7. Non-formal Education of the Out-of-School Youth (Reprinted in 1996)	75

---

### Elementary Education

---

8. Elementary Teachers in India – A Historical Survey (1800-1961)	87
---	----



- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 9. Research in Elementary Education (1964)         | 105 |
| 10. Universal Elementary Education in India (1977) | 119 |

---

### Higher Education

---

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 11. Higher Education in India: Some<br>Suggestions for Reorganisation (1972) | 127 |
| 12. The Idea of an Autonomous College (1973)                                 | 157 |
| 13. The Janata College ( <i>A New Concept</i> )                              | 173 |

---

### Education for Rural Development

---

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 14. Some Problems of Rural Education (1960)                            | 187 |
| 15. Education and Rural Development (1982)                             | 221 |
| 16. Relevance of Education to Development:<br>The Rural Context (1983) | 237 |
| <i>Index</i>   | 247 |

Primary Education
-------------------

---

## Provision of School Places in Class I to V (1948)\*

---

One of the most important problems in the administration of primary education is to decide, as accurately as possible, the provision of school-places required for a programme of compulsory education. In the First and the Second Five-Year Plans, the policy adopted was to provide as many school-places in classes I to V as would be equal to the number of children in the age group of 6-11 that was proposed to be enrolled. For example, the target for the Second Plan was to enrol about 65 per cent of the children in the age-group of 6-11. Therefore, the total number of school-places in classes I-V for which provision was made was 300 lakhs or 65 per cent of the total estimated population of children (about 460 lakhs) in the age-group of 6-11. In other words, the formula adopted was as follows:

School-places to be provided in classes I to V = Total number  
of children in the age-group of 6-11 proposed to be enrolled.

It was known that a large number of children in the under-age and over-age groups were reading in classes I to V; but it was felt that things would ultimately adjust themselves and that the total enrolment in classes I to V would be equal to the total number of children in the age-group of 6-11. The implications of this assumption are not always fully realised. It is, therefore, necessary to examine them a little more in detail.

---

\**Educational Quarterly*, 1948

The usual formula for calculating the provision of school-places or total school enrolment is as follows:

$$\text{School-places to be provided} = A + \frac{P \times Y}{100D}$$

where

- A = number of under-age and over-age children enrolled;
- P = Population of children proposed to be enrolled;
- X = Percentage of enrolment;
- Y = Average duration of school life; and,
- D = Duration of the course.

Under ideal conditions, when  $A=0$ ,  $X=100$  and  $Y=D$ , the above formula reduces itself to the simple form:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Number of school-places to be provided in classes I to V} &= \\ P &= \text{Total number of children in the age-group of 6-11.} \end{aligned}$$

It is, therefore, obvious that the assumption underlying the First and the Second Plans is true under ideal conditions only, i.e.,

- a) When there are no under-age or over-age children reading classes I to V, i.e.,  
 $A=0$ ;
- b) When every child is enrolled in school and there are no non-attending children, i.e.,  $X=100$  and
- c) When there is no wastage and every child remains in school for the full period of the course, i.e.,  $Y=D$ .

In practice, however, such ideal conditions are never realised.  $A$  is never equal to zero. On the other hand, the number of under-age and over-age children attending classes I to V is very large and at present, it is about 23.7 per cent of the total enrolment in classes I-V. Similarly,  $X$  is not generally equal to 100 and  $Y$  is rarely equal to  $D$ . At present, the percentage of wastage is about 60 and  $Y$  varies between 2.3 and 2.6 years. It is quite possible to reduce it; but the day when every child would remain in school for the full period of five years is yet rather distant. Our calculations, therefore, will have to be made on slightly different assumptions.

#### ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE THIRD PLAN

What would be the reasonable assumptions for the Third Five-Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66) is the next issue. 'A' will continue to be large even during the Third Five-Year Plan and, it is, therefore, suggested that this may be taken at the existing percentage, i.e., about 23.7 per cent of the total because the present pattern of enrolment is not likely to change materially during the next five years. 'X' may be taken at 100 because, if an effort is made, it would be possible to bring every child into school for some period, however small.  $Y$  may be taken at 3.5 years. As stated earlier, it varies between 2.3 years and 2.6 years at present and we may, therefore, assume that intensive efforts would be made to reduce wastage, and that the average period of school life would be prolonged to 3.5 years. 'P' may be taken at 580 lakhs, which is the latest estimate given by the Planning Commission for the total population of children in the age group of 6-11. I personally feel, however, that this would prove to be an underestimate in view of the latest projected population for 1966 given by the Central Statistical Organisation, and that the correct figure would have to be taken at 600 lakhs.

Substituting in the above formula:

school-places to be provided

$$\text{in classes I-V} = A + \frac{P \times Y}{100D}$$

$$= A + \frac{600 \times 100 \times 3.5}{100 \times 5} \text{ lakhs}$$

$$= A + 420 \text{ lakhs}$$

$$= 130 + 420 \text{ lakhs}$$

$$= 550 \text{ lakhs}$$

( $A$  is taken at the present rate, i.e., 23.7 per cent of the total of 550 lakhs).

It will thus be seen that we need to provide 580 lakhs of school-places by 1965-66. The enrolment that is proposed to be reached at the end of the Second Five Year Plan has been tentatively estimated at 340 lakhs. Hence, a provision of 210 lakhs of additional school-places will have to be made during the Third Five-Year Plan.

### IMPLICATIONS

The exact implications of this provision should be clearly understood. For clarity of reference, however, they have been stated below:

- i) University of school provision will have to be made if these targets are to be reached. That is to say, a school will have to be provided within easy walking distance from the home of every child.
- ii) Of the 600 lakhs of school-places provided, only about 420 lakhs are expected to be utilised by children in the age-group of 6-11. This works out at about 70 per cent of the total.
- iii) About 130 lakhs of places will be utilised by children outside the age group of 6-11. Of these, those below the age of 6 would be very few, but the vast majority would be of the age-group of 11-14. As stagnation is reduced, these children will be pushed up to classes VI-VIII and their place will be taken up by children in the age-group of 6-11.
- iv) Every child in the age-group of 6-11 is expected to be enrolled and stay in the school for 3.5 years. Since permanent literacy is attained in this period, the evil of lapse into illiteracy is expected to be reduced to the minimum by the end of the Third Plan.
- v) In the simpler language of common sense, these targets imply the enrolment of about 92 per cent of the children in the age group of 6-11.

These calculations are made on the basis of a uniform enrolment of 92 per cent for boys and girls and for all States. In practice, however, the enrolment of girls is likely to be much lower in the States of U.P., Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan and Orissa. The target for boys also is not likely to exceed 85 per cent in several States. All things considered, therefore, a provision of about 180 to 200 lakhs of additional school-places in classes I-V is all that can be realistically forecast. The provision of additional school-places made in the First Plan 60 lakhs and that in the Second Plan was 100 lakhs. Hence, the requirement of the Third Plan may be said to be about three times that of the First Plan and twice that of the Second Plan.

---

## 2

---

### Some Problems of Single-Teacher Schools (1952)\*

---

Our attitude to single-teacher schools has now been undergoing a significant change. Till about 1924, we seemed scarcely conscious of their existence. Then the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture condemned them as inefficient institutions which contributed largely to wastage.<sup>1</sup> This verdict was endorsed by the Report of the Hartog Committee whose recommendations on the subject<sup>2</sup> led, in some areas, to a determined crusade to abolish them altogether. In Baroda, for instance, almost all the single-teacher schools were abolished, either by closure or by the appointment of an additional teacher, and a rule was adopted to the effect that no new primary school would be opened unless there were at least 75 children to attend it. The results were disastrous. The total number of primary schools in the State fell from 2,996 in 1926-27 to 2,542 in 1937-38. In the latter year, the number of single-teacher schools was only 33! As many as 1,325 small villages (out of a total of 2,969 in the State) which could not manage to send 75 children to a school and whose population was 4,95,347 or 21 per cent of the total population of the State, had no educational facilities whatsoever. Moreover, these villages were largely inhabited by backward tribes like the Rani Paraj who needed education most and it was precisely they that were denied of it under this policy.<sup>3</sup> Experiences of this type began to turn the tide of educational opinion. As early as 1929, J.A. Richey had advocated the view that single-teacher schools were indispensable to India and could be

---

\**Educational Quarterly*, Vol. IV, 1952



improved.<sup>4</sup> Littlehales strongly condemned the Baroda policy of eliminating single-teacher schools and said:

There will always be small villages, where the employment of a single teacher is all that can be economically justified and wastage in school effort will always be with us especially when illiteracy is large, so that single-teacher schools will have to remain in parts of Baroda just as they remain in small and out of way villages in other parts of the world. What is desirable is that where a single-teacher school exists, the teacher should be conscientious in character and trained. It has not been found impossible in other countries for a single-teacher to conduct several small classes in a small village; it should not be impossible in Baroda. I advise the opening of single-teacher schools in places where they have been closed and transfer to them of trained teachers.

This saner view has now come to be accepted and the reformers' emphasis has shifted from the elimination of the single-teacher schools to the more important and practicable problem of their improvement. This is indeed a happy sign and augurs well for the future of rural education.

If the single-teacher schools are to be improved it goes without saying that their problems must be squarely faced and solved. These are almost innumerable and have not unfortunately received that attention from research students and administrators to which they are entitled on merits. As my humble contribution to the study of this interesting problem, I propose to discuss here some important issues that arise in the administration of single-teacher schools which exist, almost exclusively in backward rural areas.

#### REDUCTION IN NUMBERS

Although the proposition that single teacher schools cannot be abolished is irrefutable, it stands to reason that every attempt should be made to reduce their number. Some of the important suggestions put forward and tried from this point of view are given below:

- a) *Branch Schools*: Since the main difficulty of single-teacher schools is that the teacher has to handle 4 to 5 classes at

a time, the idea of establishing a central or Suzerain school in a bigish village with branches in small neighbouring villages is often put forward. The central school is necessarily a multi-teacher school; but the branch school is a single-teacher institution and teaches only the two lower standards. Under this plan, therefore, several advantages are secured at once. The very young children are not required to walk over long distances to reach the central school and can study for some time in their own village. (The grown-up boys and girls can, of course, attend the central school without inconvenience.) Secondly, the teachers of the single-teacher schools have to handle only two classes at a time, and, therefore, can maintain a higher level of efficiency; and thirdly, the branch schools are not regarded as independent units but merely as parts of the central school and are placed directly under its control. Therefore, the constant supervision of the central school helps materially in maintaining the tone of the single-teacher branches. The experiment was given a very large trial in the Punjab and at one time, the State had as many as 2,707 branch schools.<sup>5</sup>

The main objection to this proposal is that it creates a large number of incomplete schools, i.e., schools which provide a course whose duration is shorter than four years. It is common knowledge that such schools do not impart permanent literacy and that those of its students who do not pursue their studies elsewhere (generally they do not) are very likely to relapse into illiteracy. A drive to eliminate the incomplete schools is also recommended as a method of reducing waste and it appears that, under the plan of branch schools, we fall into one evil while excluding another. The Punjab experiment, therefore, did not succeed and the enthusiasm with which the Hartog Committee recommended it is no longer shared. Nevertheless, the idea can be tried in areas where, owing to compulsory education it is possible to compel older children to attend the central school and where the distance between the central school and its branches does not exceed one mile. No great results however, are expected from this

device, although it has a useful application in a limited sphere.

- b) *Compulsion*: Better results are obtained by the expedient of introducing compulsory education. Take, for instance, all villages with a population between 500 and 1,000. When attendance is voluntary most of such villages usually have an enrolment of 30 to 50 in the local schools and ordinarily only one teacher is appointed to conduct each of them. Under compulsion attendance will rise to 15, or at least 12 ½ per cent of the population and hence all such villages will have an attendance of 70 or more children and can be given two or more teachers. The universal introduction of compulsion, therefore, is the surest way to reduce the number of single-teacher schools.
- c) *Co-education*: The third device of reducing the number of single-teacher schools is to adopt co-education at the primary stage. When girls' schools are separate, they are very often single-teacher schools only and one usually comes across biggish villages with a multi-teacher boys' school but a single-teacher girls' school. There is no justification for the segregation of the sexes at the primary stage and the popular prejudice against it is dying fast, even in rural areas. Travancore-Cochin has, for instance, already adopted co-education at this level.<sup>6</sup> Bombay City has followed suit since last year, and given the right approach and educative propaganda, it should be possible to introduce co-education in all our primary schools and also to appoint mixed staffs in a fairly large number of them. This reform, if carried out, would probably have the most far reaching effect in reducing the number of single-teacher schools. It will, of course, have several other important advantages as well and one feels that it ought to be accorded a very high priority.

#### LEAVE OF TEACHERS

Another important question that needs administrative planning is that of granting leave to the teachers of single-teacher schools. The general practice is this: casual leave to the teacher is to be

sanctioned by the Chairman of the local school committee; and other kinds of leave are to be sanctioned by a higher official—generally the Chief Executive Officer of the School Board or Committee employing him—who can also appoint a substitute to take charge of the school. In practice, these arrangements break down very often. In several places, there is no local school committee at all, or even if there is one, it does not function satisfactorily. In these instances, the teacher is a law unto himself. A common trick practised by an unscrupulous teacher is to write a report saying that he had to proceed on leave on account of unavoidable circumstances (the unusually fertile imagination of such teachers can invent any number of them), to leave it in the school, and then to go away on an unofficial leave. If any officer turns up in his absence, he is shown the report. If no one does, the teacher tears out the report on return and fills in bogus attendance as if he was on duty. The best way to avoid such irregularities is to set up an active school committee or at least to have an active chairman. But this is not always possible.

Another common evil is that the school remains closed for a long time when the teacher goes on leave and a substitute is not or cannot be appointed. Although teachers are required to intimate their intention to go on long leave sufficiently in advance, this is not always done, and sometimes it is not also possible. When this happens, great delays are caused in appointing a substitute because the official making the appointment has to follow a prescribed procedure. Some time is lost before the news of the teacher's absence reaches the headquarters; then the office red-tape must have its time, and sooner or later an order of appointment is issued to a candidate from the approved list. Some more time is lost before the candidate gets the order and joins his post. Sometimes he chooses not to join; then the order has to be sent to another candidate, and so on until somebody turns up at the school. And all this while, the school remains closed for lack of a teacher!

It must be made clear that the evil is not imaginary. It is very real and very grave. A pilot survey carried out for an year in six districts of an important State showed that more than 10 per cent of the single-teacher schools had remained closed at some time

or the other because the teacher went on leave and a substitute was not appointed in time; that no substitute was generally appointed (or could be appointed) if the duration of the leave was less than 30 days; and that several schools were remained closed longer than a month owing to difficulties of the type mentioned above. The situation has, therefore, to be taken note of and duly remedied.

One proposal made after a careful statistical investigation carried out in Maharashtra State is this: The single-teacher schools in a district should be divided into convenient groups of 10 to 25. A big primary school, central to this group should be selected as the controlling school and an extra relieving teacher should be attached there. Whenever a teacher of a single-teacher school proceeds on leave of more than seven days' duration, he intimates the headmaster of the controlling school who at once sends the relieving teacher to take charge of the school and then sends the papers to the headquarters for formal orders. Under this arrangement, the chances of a single-teacher school remaining closed are reduced to the minimum and prompt action to send a substitute is made possible. The only drawback is that it needs a reserve of relieving teachers at 5 per cent. But the total number of single-teacher schools and its financial implication are formidable in some areas.

An Educational Inspector in Maharashtra tried a very interesting experiment to meet this difficulty without involving additional expenditure. He grouped all schools within a radius of five or six miles into one unit, and placed them under the direct control of the Headmaster of a conveniently selected central school. Whenever the teacher in charge of a single-teacher school in the group desired to go on leave; he was required to get the permission of this Headmaster. He could easily do so because he lived within convenient distance of the controlling school. If the duration of the leave exceeded seven days, the Headmaster immediately sent one of his assistants to conduct the single-teacher school. The central school was short of one teacher no doubt; but as it was a multi-teacher school, the work could somehow be managed. As soon as a substitute was appointed by the head office and joined duties, the teacher of the central school

resumed his own post. In this way, all the extra financial burden involved in the former proposal is avoided and the work of the single-teacher school is kept going by shifting the inconvenience to a neighbouring multi-teacher school which can overcome it more easily. The plan also makes it possible to control the teachers of single-teacher schools when no efficient local school committee can be set up to supervise their work. In fact, the more one thinks of it, the more does one feel convinced that the experiment is full of potentialities and deserves wide recognition and publicity.

#### TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Coming to personnel problems, it is generally agreed in theory that the work in a single-teacher school is, in several ways, more difficult than that in a multi-teacher school. It is, therefore, essential to place the former under trained, capable and conscientious teachers. But in practice, this does not ordinarily happen. The single teacher schools are mostly situated in small scattered villages which are generally difficult of access and where amenities of life like a bazar, post office, good drinking water and medical aid are often not available. Teachers are, therefore, generally unwilling to serve in these schools. Moreover, the number of trained, capable and conscientious teachers is small and the bigger full-fledged primary schools have a prior claim on them. Consequently, it is usually the untrained and the junior teacher that happens to be posted to a single-teacher school; and very often, a recalcitrant teacher is transferred to it as a form of punishment! Under these conditions, it is hardly a matter for surprise if the quality of work turned out in single-teacher schools is generally poor.

The real solution of the problem is to increase the percentage of trained teachers to the maximum. State Governments should accept the principle that no primary teacher should be confirmed in service until he is trained; and they should take steps to so increase the number of training institutions that every new recruit to the cadre of primary teachers would either have been trained already or can be sent in for training within three to four years from the date of his appointment. If this reform is carried out, and if the recruitment to the cadre is carefully made—this may involve

a radical alteration in our present system of recruiting primary teachers and perhaps some reduction in the powers of local bodies in the matter—it will be possible to place single-teacher schools mostly under trained and capable teachers. In the meanwhile, the administering authorities should try to make the best of a bad situation and see to it that single-teacher schools are placed, as far as possible, in the charge of trained, or at least, conscientious teachers. Where it is not possible to do so for some reason or the other, the deficiency may be made up, to some extent at least, by arranging short refresher courses or by providing a closer supervision over the work of the teacher through a system of central school controls on the lines described earlier.

Whether the teachers of single-teacher schools need any special training for their job is another issue that arises in this context. Unfortunately, the problem has received but scant attention. Most of our training colleges for primary teachers are situated in urban areas and hence the trainees never get an opportunity to see a model single-teacher school in action or to practise in it. Moreover, the method of training usually adopted is to make the trainee give a number of isolated practice lessons. This is suitable for a multi-teacher school where a teacher is in charge of one class at a time or where the teaching is arranged subjectwise, but is hardly of any use in a single-teacher school. The special methods required to be adopted in a single-teacher school are not at all included in training institutions of several States, and the subject is totally neglected. In some States, the topic is included in the curriculum but its actual teaching becomes theoretical and unreal and is restricted to one or two lectures of a hackneyed type. It would, therefore, be no exaggeration to say that the average teacher who comes out of our training institutions is generally ignorant of the special methods to be adopted in single-teacher schools or is incapable of using them successfully. This is a matter which needs immediate attention. Since nearly 50 per cent of our primary schools are single-teacher institutions, it is almost a certainty that more than half of our teachers will have to serve in single-teacher schools for some part of their service. The special techniques to be adopted in single-teacher schools should, therefore, form an integral part of the curriculum of every training institution for primary teachers; every teacher under

training should be required to do continuous practice-teaching in a single-teacher school for a period of not less than a week; and most training colleges should either be shifted to rural areas or an experimental single-teacher school should necessarily be conducted in association with each of them. Another useful method would be to arrange special refresher courses, whose duration need not exceed about a week or two, and to make every teacher who has been placed in charge of a single teacher school to attend them.

#### EQUIPMENT

Equipment is an important aid to teaching and carefully planned equipment can often take the place of a teacher by setting the pupils to work on their own. A liberal provision of good equipment is, therefore, a great aid to a single-teacher school where the person in charge has to keep four different units of pupils simultaneously busy. Here too, the usual policy is to neglect the single-teacher schools and today they are the most poorly equipped of all. The earlier this unimaginative outlook is abandoned the better.

#### FRESH ADMISSIONS

Fresh admissions to the lowest primary class should be made in the first month or two months of the school year that the class becomes homogeneous and shows better progress. This rule is essential for all primary schools yet it is often not enforced in large areas. In single-teacher schools at any place, a scrupulous observance of this rule is very essential; otherwise, the local class gets subdivided into a number of further units depending upon the progress of children and the work of the teacher becomes all the more difficult.

#### SHIFT SYSTEM

A useful device to reduce the number of classes which the teacher of a single-teacher school has to handle at a time is to adopt the shift system—a scheme where the primary course consists of four classes, the adoption of a shift system would mean that the teacher has to handle only two classes at a time—a comparatively simple

affair. It would be very interesting to find out whether the children studying under such a plan learn less than those where the teacher teaches all the four classes at a time. The chances are that, in so far as the achievement of the pupils is concerned, the two systems would just be equal in result; and the shift system would have the additional advantage of making the task of the teacher lighter.

#### PRIVATE SINGLE-TEACHER SCHOOLS

So far, the problems of single-teacher schools under public management alone have been discussed. Some of the suggestions made above will also apply to single-teacher schools under private managements; but in certain respects, alternative measures will have to be adopted. The problem of the leave of teachers, for instance, is not acute in respect of private schools. It would be enough to insist that the management (who is very often the teacher himself) should make some acceptable arrangement for the work of the school to be carried on in the absence of the teacher on long leave and, as a safety measure, a panel cut in the grant-in-aid should be imposed if the school remains closed for a long time. Similarly, special facilities must be given to the teachers of private single-teacher schools to get themselves trained (i.e. by award of stipends, free-studentships in training institutions, etc.) and an inducement for the purpose may also be offered by giving a higher grant-in-aid to those schools which are in charge of trained teachers. Finally, liberal specific purpose grants should be given to these schools for the purchase of equipment and some of the equipment may also be supplied in kind.

#### RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION OF LITERATURE

Probably, the most important need of the hour is to carry out a good deal of research and experimentation on the problem. It would for instance, be interesting to compare the achievements of pupils in single and multi-teacher schools. The investigations carried out in Bombay by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, showed that the single-teacher schools were not worse off than the multi-teacher schools in respect of stagnation, wastage and lapse into illiteracy. There is, therefore,

enough ground to feel that the evils of single-teacher schools have been unduly magnified and further investigations are urgently called for. Experiments to evolve better pedagogic techniques for use in single-teacher schools are of extreme importance and it is in this field that private enterprise can make a significant contribution. Further, it would be very useful to collate together the practical experience of good and successful teachers of single-teacher schools and make the useful devices discovered and used by them in actual practice known to the larger body of teachers through journals and suitably produced pamphlets. In USA a good deal of very useful literature is available to the workers in single-teacher schools. Kate V. Wofford's *Teaching in small schools or Modern Education in the Small Rural School* are good examples of such literature. In the various Indian languages such literature is conspicuous by its absence. The Government of India may do well to publish some literature on the subject in English and Hindi; the State Governments should then adapt it to their own local conditions and publish it in their regional languages as handbooks for teachers.

#### REFERENCES

1. Report, p. 525.
2. Report, pp. 60, 62 and 73.
3. Naik J.P., *Compulsory Primary Education in Baroda State* (Progress of Education, Poona, February, 1941).
4. Asiatic review, Jan. 1929, p. 89.
5. Report of The Hortog Committee, p. 73.
6. As Shri M.D. Jivanayakam writes: "Though a Chief Inspectress of Girls' schools has been retained and a few Assistant Inspectresses of schools for inspecting Girls' Middle and High Schools (English, Malayalam and Tamil), primary schools are now inspected by women or men Assistant Inspecting Officers whether they are boys' primary schools or girls' primary schools. Even in 1930, more girls studied in boys' schools than in girls' schools; but in 1930 the number of girls in co-educational schools was 1,38,350 out of a total 2,06,882; in 1939 it was 2,61,377 out of a total of 2,94,404. The staff has also become mixed. Therefore, there are now primary schools and not boys' primary schools and girls'

primary schools. This is very economic, as will be apparent in a place which has enough boys and girls to fill one school completely, but not enough boys for one school and enough girls for another. Under the old order where two schools with two *sets* of *staff* and equipment were necessary, now one school suffices."

(Primary Education in Travancore, *Teaching*, Vol., XIV, P. 125).

---

### 3

---

## The Village Panchayats and Primary Education\*

---

The modern trend of primary education all over the world is to make the primary school a centre for the local community. To do so, a close association between the primary school and the local community is necessary. Such association may come about through voluntary organisations such as Parent-Teacher Associations and/or through elected bodies in the local community such as Village Panchayats.

The Philippines and China have made great progress in such integration. In India, the principle is an essential aspect of basic education.

An association of the village school with the village community has several advantages. It becomes an important project in the social education of the adults; it is of great advantage to the school itself in improving its working; it secures additional financial resources to the support of the local school; and finally it provides several opportunities for training the students of the local school—who are the adult community members of tomorrow—in activities of social service.

Compulsory education can never become effective in rural areas until the local community is made to take interest in the local school and is made statutorily responsible for the enforcement of compulsory attendance.

In several parts of India, and particularly in Madras, attempts are being made to take the school closer to the people. The general experience is that, in all areas where such experiments are being tried, the local communities come forward to accommodate and equip the local schools and even to provide free mid-day meals to poor children.

---

\**Indian Journal of Adult Education*, June, 1960

### PROPOSED FUNCTIONS OF VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

Assuming that Village Panchayats are to be associated with the administration of local primary schools, the following is a tentative scheme:

With the trend unmistakably towards democratic decentralisation the Panchayats at long last are coming to their own in India. This welcome trend, however, has to prove its success: it can do so only if experience shows that the Panchayats can wield authority intelligently and exercise control with an awareness of the needs of the service it can provide to the people.

A great challenge and responsibility that rests on the Social Education worker is to create this awareness.

In the accompanying article, an eminent educationist indicates the role which the Panchayats can play in the field of primary education. He also indicates how the school, hitherto cut off from the community, can become a part of it.

The article has an obvious significance to the social education programme.

A list of the functions which may be assigned to the Village Panchayats in this behalf:

- a) to assist the Panchayat Samitis in the preparation and implementation of plans for the development of the primary education in their areas;
- b) to provide adequate accommodation and equipment for local primary schools;
- c) to carry out the current repairs of the school building and if directed by the Panchayat Samiti, to carry out special repairs and to construct new buildings;
- d) to provide for the welfare of the children attending local primary schools;
- e) to exercise such supervision over the local primary school as may be prescribed or may be directed by the Panchayat Samiti by a general or special order;
- f) to be responsible for the enforcement of compulsory attendance in the village in accordance with the Rules and Regulations prescribed for the purpose and general or special directives of the State Government and the Panchayat Samitis;

- g) subject to the funds at its disposal, to provide poor children with slates, books, clothes and other educational equipment;
- h) to be responsible for the proper management of the School Fund;
- i) to provide playgrounds and school gardens and to maintain them with the assistance of the pupils and the staff of the schools;
- j) to make provision for drinking water and other necessary amenities required by school children;
- k) to make provision, wherever possible, for midday meals to poor and undernourished children;
- l) to make provision for school uniforms;
- m) to celebrate school functions and to organise excursions or other social and cultural programmes in accordance with the instructions that may be issued by Government or the Panchayat Samiti from time to time; and
- n) generally to exercise such powers and perform such duties as the Panchayat Samiti may delegate from time to time.

Welfare of children is generally accepted as a responsibility of the Local Panchayat. This includes providing poor children with free supplies of books, slates and other educational equipment; and giving free mid-day meals if possible.

Cooperation of the Village Panchayat is necessary in locating and securing buildings for the local schools. Repairs can be carried out by Village Panchayats. Where the Village Panchayat is especially efficient the Panchayat Samiti might entrust them with special repairs or even the construction of new buildings.

Purchase of equipment by the Village Panchayat would encourage more careful handling than where such equipment is supplied from the outside, either by the Department or the Panchayat Samiti. It would encourage local initiative and competition in having better-equipped schools. Purchase at the local level would reduce the great delays in getting equipment inherent in central ordering. It would assure that the school received items of highest priority if the budget could not cover all times. Sometimes essential items are dropped in favour of less-needed items, when the decision must be made by the District Inspector.

Schools in poor or backward areas might suffer if supplying equipment is made the sole responsibility of the Village Panchayat. Also, bulk purchasing often results in considerable economy. Accordingly, some cooperative arrangement between the Village Panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti could be worked out, with the Village Panchayat arranging priorities and preparing the budget, and the Panchayat Samiti giving approval and indicating which items will be purchased in bulk.

Village Panchayats should assume almost exclusive responsibility for enforcing compulsory education. This includes preparing a census of school-age children; passing attendance orders; publishing lists of non-attending children and issuing notices to their parents; summoning defaulting parents before them; launching prosecution against defaulting parents where necessary; and granting exemptions in accordance with the Provisions of the Act and the regulations and general directives issued in this behalf.

#### VILLAGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

In practice the Panchayats may set up a Village School Committee to handle functions related to the school. This Committee might best consist of four to eight village residents over 21 years of age, elected by the Village Panchayat, with at least half the members from itself. All members should be people interested in education, and there should be at least one woman and/or member from the backward classes. Committee members elected from outside the Panchayat should have passed primary standard V at least. The jurisdiction of the Committee should include all schools within the area of the Panchayat.

Under the Bombay Primary Education Rules, 1949, the powers of supervision to be given to the Village School Committee have been specifically enumerated. A Village committee is expected to:

- 1) visit all schools placed under its supervision at least once a month;
- 2) note whether the number of pupils in the school at the time of the visit corresponds with the number marked as present in the register and report any irregularity to the Administrative Officer;
- 3) report to the appropriate authorities any irregularity or unpunctuality in the matter of the opening and closing of the school and the teachers' attendance;

- 4) see that the school premises are in good repair and kept in a sanitary condition;
- 5) supervise the expenditure of grants placed at the disposal of the Head teacher;
- 6) permit the Head-teacher of the local school to leave his charge in case of emergency and to grant him casual leave of absence;
- 7) report the absence from school, without leave, of the Head - teacher and the assistant masters;
- 8) hold charge of the single-teacher schools in the event of the absence of the teacher on leave or in such other emergencies;
- 9) be present at the school at the time of the visit of any officer of the Education or other Departments;
- 10) be present at the time when the charge of the school is being handed over to another Head-teacher.

It would be wrong to draw up a standard list of powers of supervision to be delegated to all Village Panchayats. Conditions vary greatly from village to village. In some villages, there are even high schools at present and it is possible to have some trained graduates as members of Village Panchayats. It is suggested that two lists of powers of supervision be drawn up. Some of these powers, very simple in character, would be delegated necessarily to all Village Panchayats. Delegation of other powers would be left to the discretion of the Panchayat Samitis who by resolution would authorise individual Village Panchayats. Larger powers of supervision should be given to more efficient Village Panchayats and a power delegated should also be withdrawn in cases of misuse. This would create a healthy atmosphere of competition between the Village Panchayats. The aim would be to transfer powers to the local level as quickly as Village Panchayats could responsibly handle them.

#### SCHOOL FUND

In order to carry out its responsibilities, the Village School Committee should have a School Fund placed at its disposal. This fund can include a contribution from the Village Panchayat; voluntary contributions from the local community; all income from the school farm or crafts; fines realised in the locality under the Compulsory Education Act; such other miscellaneous items



as may be prescribed from time to time; and a grant-in-aid from the Panchayat Samiti. Ordinarily the Panchayat Samiti grant-in-aid would be proportional to local contributions, with higher percentages given to poor or backward villages.

#### CONTRIBUTION FROM THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

At present Village Panchayats are not required to make any contribution for the local schools. This is wrong in principle. Villages may need a higher proportion of grants-in-aid than municipalities, but both are local governments and both should be intimately associated with their local schools and made to pay for them. A minimum statutory contribution should be required. It could be smaller than for municipalities and could vary depending on the income of the Village Panchayat. It might be two per cent for Panchayats whose total annual income (exclusive of Government Grant) is less than Rs. 5,000 three per cent for those whose annual income is more than Rs. 5,000 but less than Rs. 10,000 and four percent in all other cases.

#### VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

It is also suggested that every Village School Committee be authorised and encouraged to collect voluntary contributions and donations from the local public. A system of this type has existed in France since 1849 and it is now a national programme of great importance. Every school maintains a "School Chest" or Fund to which the local public makes voluntary contributions in cash or kind. In order to encourage such contributions, Government makes a definite grant-in-aid to every School Chest at a fixed proportion of the total amount collected locally. The whole amount, including the Government grant-in-aid, is placed at the disposal of the local School Committee for expenditure in connection with the school. It is usually utilised for such items as providing the school with equipment, managing the school gardens, taking the children out for excursion, providing extracurricular activities, providing free meals or clothes to poor children, etc. Such an institution deserves to be encouraged in our rural areas also.

It is felt that if the steps outlined above are taken, it would be possible to stimulate adequate local interest in the primary school as well as to evoke the largest possible local support for advancing primary education.

---

## 4

---

### Objectives, Curricula and Methods of Teaching (1800-1937)\*

---

#### EARLY VERNACULAR SCHOOLS

The word 'primary' or 'elementary' education came in use in modern Indian education rather late and, in the early days, there were only two types of schools which were mutually exclusive - English and Vernacular. The British officials who laid the foundations of the modern system of education in India were most concerned with one issue: how to impart a knowledge of western science and literature to the Indian people. This could obviously be done most easily through the medium of the English language and it was for this purpose that the scheme of English schools was devised - its object being to teach the English language in the first instance and then to introduce the student to the learning and culture of the West. Since English could be taught only to a small percentage of people, they also desired to impart Western culture and knowledge through the medium of the Indian languages and the system of 'vernacular' schools was first conceived for this purpose. The two systems were mutually exclusive and the 'vernacular' did not lead to the 'English'.

The system of vernacular schools grew up most conspicuously in the Province of Bombay between 1824 and 1854. The teachers of these schools, which usually had ten classes, were given a long course of pre-service training to enable them to teach their ambitious curriculum which included reading, writing, arithmetic, history of England and India, geography, astronomy, natural philosophy, algebra, Euclidean Geometry, and trigonometry. It would, therefore, be wrong to call them 'primary'

---

\*\*NCERT, 1964

schools. They were, in fact, 'secondary' schools which used the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction; and the Government of Bombay even conceived of and conducted, for some time, a 'vernacular' college for their students.

#### THE BIRTH OF THE LOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

What were the factors which changed this high concept of 'vernacular' schools into that of 'primary' schools which generally covered the primary or the Lower Elementary School, which prepared their students for secondary schools? The answer is to be found in three sets of pressures.

The first was financial. These schools were naturally costlier and, therefore, there was a continuous pressure to lower their standards with a view to reducing costs. The second came from the desire to build up a regular educational ladder. A child should naturally have an elementary instruction in the three R's in his own mother-tongue before he begins the study of English. It was, therefore, felt that the proper object of 'vernacular schools' should be to teach the three R's and to prepare the child for a secondary school as quickly as possible in three or four years at the most. The third pressure came from the parents. Accustomed to the indigenous schools for centuries, the average Indian thought only in terms of an education restricted to the three R's and resisted all attempts to introduce a wider curriculum. The new vernacular schools of the Government were, therefore, quite unpopular. An interesting light is thrown on this aspect of the problem by the following report of an Educational Inspector of this period:

"Whatever may be thought of these results (i.e., the curricula of vernacular schools) in other quarters, the people themselves - the cess-payers seem to think their boys in our Vernacular Schools are required to learn much. In a former report I once mentioned that one of the chief men in a large village, after sitting out the school examination, in which he seemed to take some interest, asked me to order the school master to teach only writing and ciphering, and not to use printed books or maps. This year, at another large village, which has a great deal of good land, and pays much cess, Mr Kulkarnee told me, that if I made the school master teach only writing and ciphering the school attendance would be trebled; that the people did not want what he called 'sirkaree vidya' that 'gawtee vidya' was enough for them, and as

much as their children could be expected to acquire. A village elder and spokesman at another place (a Talocka town, where the Mamlatdar was present at the school examination) made a very animated speech against much learning, and in favour of the people's right to be as ignorant as their fathers. He said Government seemed to wish to make the people clever, and that education was doubtless a proper thing for Europe and Europeans, but that his people preferred to remain as they were. I mention these things as illustration of the general, if not universal, feeling of the people, which must be taken into account in judging the progress of Government Vernacular Schools and in revising examination standards. I have, elsewhere reported that I do not think these standards should be lowered; but I think some compromise should be made to induce boys to attend our schools, who now attend only indigenous schools or none at all."<sup>1</sup>

The result, therefore, was that the old idea of vernacular schools was given up and by 1870, the new 'primary' schools had only four classes, taught only the three R's and prepared their students for secondary schools. In the circumstances of the period, the liquidation of this great experiment is disappointing, but not surprising. That the idea managed to survive for nearly half a century is, in fact, almost a miracle.

In other provinces, no attempt was made to develop 'vernacular' schools on the lines of Bombay. But the objective of vernacular education was defined as conveying 'useful and practical knowledge, suited to every station in life, to the great mass of people'. This meant the three R's to begin with, but would also have to include several other things. The attempt to introduce these 'other things', however, was resisted as strongly as in Bombay and the concept of a primary school teaching only the three R's and preparing children for secondary schools after a course of three to five years became general in all parts of the country. The new 'vernacular' schools of government did not, therefore, raise standards in the indigenous schools as they were expected to do. It was the indigenous schools that dragged the government vernacular schools to their own level.

#### THE BIRTH OF THE HIGHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Soon a reaction set in. First, the Wood's Education Despatch had pointed out that the 'active measures' of government be directed

to one significant problem: 'how useful and practical knowledge, suited to every station in life, may be best conveyed to the great mass of the people.'

Any attempt to implement this directive implied a raising of standards in the elementary schools. Secondly, government needed a large number of employees who had received some education beyond the three R's but who need not have a knowledge of English. The teachers of primary schools, for instance, must have studied beyond the primary stage but not necessarily in the secondary schools. Such administrative needs suggested the lengthening of the primary course to some extent. Thirdly, with the expansion of elementary education, a body of students began to come in - students who could stay in school for two or three years after the primary stage, but who would not be able to go in for the longer secondary course or for whom a secondary school could not be provided. It was naturally felt that a longer elementary course would be an appropriate answer to this problem. Steps, therefore, began to be taken to increase the duration of the elementary course to five, six, seven or eight years, according to local conditions and needs. Thus came the 'upper primary' school stage into existence. The 'primary' or 'vernacular' or 'elementary' school continued to provide a short course as before and mainly aimed at teaching the three R's. At the end of this course, a pupil could go into an 'anglo-vernacular' school which led on further to the high school and to the university. In the alternative, he could join an 'upper primary or vernacular' or 'higher elementary' or 'middle' school which prepared him for some job such as that of an elementary school teacher or a lower grade employee in a government department. The elementary course thus came to consist of two stages — a lower stage of three to five years and an upper stage of two to three years and this development became fairly general by 1881 and almost universal by 1901.

#### Elementary School Curricula in 1881-82 and 1902-07

The Report of the Indian Education Commission describes the curricula of elementary schools as they existed in the different provinces of India in 1882. They have been reproduced in Appendix I given at the end of this chapter. The elementary course of this period generally covered five years (Bombay had the longest course of six years). It was mainly restricted to the

teaching of the three R's at the lower stage. Even at the higher stage, all that it tried to teach was a little history and geography, sanitation, native accounts, elementary drawing, agriculture, and a little English (in some areas only). By 1901, the process of lengthening the elementary course and enriching the curriculum had gone a step further. The primary schools now came to consist of six to eight classes, with or without an 'infant' class meant for very young children. An analysis of the curricula of this period has been given in Appendix II at the end of this chapter. It will be seen that the main additions to the curriculum were drawing, object lessons, singing and recitation, science, mensuration, physical education and manual work (as an optional subject only in a few areas). The objectives of the full course of elementary education are thus described by the *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India* (1897-1902, pp. 158-59):

The course of instruction in a primary school is simple and in general the maximum which it attempts is to teach the child to read and write his own language; to obtain a sufficient knowledge of arithmetic and mensuration to enable him to do easy sums; and to understand the simple forms of native accounts and the village map; to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of geography, agriculture, sanitation and of the history of his country; to train his faculties by simple kindergarten and object lessons; and to develop his physique by drill and exercises. The choice of books is so designed that the child may gain some knowledge of history, geography and the elements of science from the primers from which he learns to read. Of recent years endeavour has been made to render the course less bookish and more practical and specially by the introduction of kindergarten methods and object lessons. Where these methods have been used with discretion, that is to say, by competent teachers, without elaborate forms, rules, and appliances, using objects familiar to the children in their everyday life, they have been productive of much benefit, in imparting greater life and reality to the teaching and in training the children's senses and powers of observation.

The motivation for these changes came, not so much from local needs and demands as from the desire to initiate in India the changes that were taking place simultaneously in England. This, of course, has been one of the powerful forces in the building of

modern Indian education in all sectors. Shri R.V. Parulekar, who made a special study of the evolution of elementary school curricula in Bombay, brings out this point very clearly (and what he says about Bombay is applicable to other areas as well):

Let us turn to the elementary schools of England. In 1862, the first Education Code saw the light of the day, and therein the subjects prescribed for standards I to IV of the elementary schools consisted of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic only. (Needle-work was prescribed for girls). Of course, as in our schools, the subjects were divided into four parts according to standards of increasing difficulty. If we confine ourselves to the first four standards of the English elementary schools of those days, we see that, in 1868, Geography, History and Grammar were prescribed as 'optional' subjects for standard IV with the proviso that one or two of these three might be taught in standard IV only. In 1875, they were still 'optional', but not more than two were to be optional subjects. It was only in 1893 that one of the three subjects, History, Geography and Grammar was made obligatory in the Primary School course at the option of the schools. In that year, Drawing was also made compulsory. It will thus be seen that during the years 1862 to 1893, a period of over thirty years, not a single subject out of all the above subjects except language and arithmetic (i.e. the three R's) was made obligatory in English schools. It is also important to note that only a very few schools provided instruction in these subjects before 1900 in the lower standards of the primary schools. It may be further pointed out that during a period of thirty years from 1862-92, the English primary schools had the busiest period in their history; for, while in 1862 only 5 to 6 per cent of the population of England was in schools, in 1880, this percentage had nearly trebled and in 1893 when one of the three subjects: History, Geography or Grammar was made obligatory, England had, for nearly more than a decade, the proud privilege of having almost all school-going children (6 to 11 according to our standard) in its primary schools.

It will be both interesting and instructive to see how the Bombay Educational administrators imposed the several 'optional' subjects of the English schools on the Bombay Primary Schools, making them not 'optional' as in England but obligatory. The Bombay (lower) primary school curriculum (standards up to IV)

was first framed under the Departmental Code in 1865-66 and the subjects included were exactly the same as in England at the time, namely, the three R's except that Bombay added Grammar to the fourth standard. As soon as England prescribed Geography and History as 'optional' subjects for standard IV. Bombay planted both of them almost the very same year on standards II or III as compulsory subjects. As to Object Lessons, Bombay had them in 1887 or five years later than England (1882) but compulsorily, not at option, as was the case in England. As regards Drawing, England had it as a compulsory subject in 1893, and Bombay ten years later. Nature Study took very long to come to Bombay. In England it appeared on the scene in about 1902, in Bombay in 1919. Be it however noted that compulsory Physical Training, which was introduced in English Primary Schools in 1902, has not as yet appeared in the Bombay Schools as a compulsory subject. It would, therefore, appear that as soon as it was discovered in Bombay that a certain subject was introduced in the schools of England, it was soon prescribed for the Bombay schools, making the curriculum compulsorily richer and richer and even far more in advance of the ordinary English elementary school curriculum of the time, at least so far as the number of subjects was concerned. One cannot, however, help remarking that in copying wholesale the English model and superimposing it on Indian schools, the educational administrators hardly took into account the very important fact that the needs of a mainly agricultural country split into numerous villages would not be the same as those of a highly urbanised and industrialised country like England. It follows, therefore, that even purely from the point of view of efficiency, the curriculum laid down was not altogether suitable for the needs of the Indian masses.<sup>3</sup>

### The Experiment of Rural Schools

Elementary education, as it had thus developed in the nineteenth century, had three specific objectives: (1) it imparted literacy; (2) it prepared for admission to a secondary school; and (3) it secured, for every pupil who completed the elementary course, some lower job under Government. These objectives were accepted without question so long as the expansion of elementary education was within bounds and was restricted to the urban areas or to the upper and middle classes. But with the increasing enrolments as had already been reached by 1901- and still more with those

contemplated for the future - the second of these objectives could apply to only a few children and the third to an extremely small minority. The traditional system of elementary education was thus left with only one objective, viz., to impart literacy. This situation naturally raised a number of difficult questions. Is mere literacy worthwhile? Would it be desirable to incur such heavy expenditure on elementary education merely for the sake of literacy? How does elementary education constitute 'useful and practical knowledge, suited to every station in life' which, in the words of the Despatch of 1854, was the purpose of elementary education? How does elementary education help a rural child or the child of an agriculturist—and these formed 90 per cent of the total population—to become a better and a more useful citizen? These questions began to be raised towards the end of the nineteenth century and they became all the more urgent in the twentieth as the pace of expansion increased. It is to these questions that the Education Departments had to find answers.

The problem was dealt with in the comprehensive programme of educational development initiated by Lord Curzon in the beginning of this century. He felt that the traditional curriculum could be regarded as suitable for urban areas only; and that, whatever its merits, it did not meet the needs of the agriculturists or of rural areas. Hence, arose the need to differentiate the curriculum of the rural school from that of the urban and to make rural school conform closely to its own environment. He said:

The instruction of the masses in such subjects as will best fit them for their position in life involves some differentiation in the courses for rural schools, especially in connection with the attempts which are being made to connect primary teaching with familiar objects. The aim of the rural schools should be, not to impart definite agricultural teaching, but to give to the children a preliminary training which will make them intelligent cultivators, will train them to be observers, thinkers, and experimenters in however humble a manner, and will protect them in their business transactions with the landlords to whom they pay rent and the grain dealers to whom they dispose off their crops. The reading books prescribed should be written in simple language, not in unfamiliar literary style, and should deal

with topics associated with rural life. The grammar taught should be elementary, and only native systems of arithmetic should be used. The village map should be thoroughly understood: and a most useful course of instruction may be given in the accountant's papers, enabling every boy before leaving school to master the intricacies of the village accounts and to understand the demands that may be made upon the cultivator. The Government of India regard it as a matter of the greatest importance to provide a simple, suitable, and useful type of school for the agriculturist, and to foster the demand for it among the population.

These ideas were tried out in almost all parts of the country and, in particular, an attempt was made to introduce nature study, school gardening and agriculture in rural schools. But they did not succeed. This was due mainly to two reasons. There were immense difficulties in getting equipment, land and trained teachers. A more serious difficulty, however, arose from the fact that this differentiation tended to create a gulf between the urban and the rural school—the former, teaching more language, arithmetic and English, led to secondary schools and careers, while the latter, which was devoting a good deal of time to agriculture, led nowhere. The rural population resented this and desired to have schools which were as like the urban schools as possible. The situation has been graphically described by the *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India, 1917-22*, (p.122) in the following words:

It is often assumed that the education given in a village school is despised because it is not practical enough. In many cases, however, the parent's objection is just the opposite. He has no desire to have his son taught agriculture, partly because he thinks he knows far more about that than the teacher, but still more because his ambition is that his boy should become a teacher, or a clerk.

The solution which is so frequently put forward of popularising schools by adapting rural education to rural needs has little or no meaning in the absence of an agreement as to rural needs between the rustic and the reformer. The reformer has in mind the introduction of utilitarian studies such as agriculture into the village school course. The rustic sends his child to school to learn to read and write. He has no doubt of the fact that the village guru

knows less of agriculture than he does himself and that what the boy needs in the matter of agricultural knowledge he can learn by doing in the fields. It is a view altogether sensible; and some sympathy may be felt for the parents in one backward area who went so far as to beat the guru for setting their boys to work in the school garden. A subject which is far more likely to attract pupils to primary schools is English. The teaching of English in primary classes is permitted in Madras, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and in the higher or secondary classes in Bombay.

The Education Departments tried to eliminate the difference between the urban and elementary schools by introducing the curricula of urban schools in the rural schools and vying with each other in teaching English, which was then esteemed as the key to everything considered worthwhile. Consequently, a reform which began with the idea of giving an agricultural bias to rural schools ended by introducing the teaching of English in them! The rural schools thus came back to the point from which they had started at the beginning of this reform. The objectives of elementary education which were designed in early nineteenth century, for a system which catered for a limited enrolment, continued to dominate right down to 1937, even though the composition and the nature of the school population had undergone great changes with expansion.

The answer to this difficult problem did come at last, not from the Education Departments, but from Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. In 1937, he placed his scheme of basic education before the country and claimed that it was the one answer to India's needs in elementary education. The birth and subsequent development of this revolutionary educational philosophy and programme will be dealt with in the next chapter.

#### TEACHING METHODS

The teaching methods of the indigenous schools were generally crude and based upon long and continuous drill and rote memory. When the new elementary schools were started, the teachers were the persons who had received their early education in the indigenous schools; and, as no other training had been given to them, they unconsciously adopted the methods of teaching in indigenous schools to which they were accustomed. The new elementary schools, therefore, also started with teaching methods

based on rote memory and drill, supported by severe physical punishment for the defaulters. In the teaching of the three R's - which formed the core curriculum in the indigenous schools - these methods were always adopted without a question. But even in the new subjects added to the curriculum, the same methods were extended without a change. History, for instance, meant learning by heart long list of names of kings and the dates of their birth, accession or death. Geography meant learning by heart long lists of place names. Even a concept like 'the earth is round' was taught by making the boys learn by heart the seven different proofs to show that the earth is round.

Thus emphasis on rote learning and memory could have been reduced with the passage of time if the training of teachers had been properly developed. But that did not happen in India. Even in 1901, only 18 per cent of the teachers were trained. Moreover, 'training of teachers' meant, at this time, not so much their instruction in pedagogy and methods of teaching, as further general education. In all training courses, therefore, subject knowledge was emphasized very greatly and little attention was paid to methods of teaching. The humanising effect of teacher training was not, therefore, felt in elementary education in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, a new deterrent, the examination, which was unknown even in the indigenous school, was added to the rigours of the traditional methods. This was mainly due to the system of payment by results which was adopted in England in 1862 and introduced in India in 1865. Under it, the inspecting officers had to examine annually *every* pupil in *every* subject. This external test, on which the whole future of the teacher depended, became the guiding factor in methods of teaching and the teacher had no desire to do anything except to prepare his boys for the inspectorial examination. The boys also cooperated because, for them, the mere passing of the examination meant the getting of a Government job and through it, both social status and economic security. Thus teachers and pupils alike worked for a common objective, for upper primary school examination. The Indian Education Commission, which did not commend the system of payment by results for the secondary and higher stages, viewed it most suitable for the elementary stage; and it continued to dominate the scene till the close of the century.

By 1901, however, things began to improve though rather slowly. Curzon pointed out that, in the Indian system of

education, excessive prominence was given to examinations, that the courses of study were too purely literary in character and that the schools and colleges trained the intelligence of the pupils too little and their memory too much. In the reform movement that he initiated in the early years of this century, therefore, the system of payment by results was abandoned. The training of teachers was improved with greater emphasis on pedagogy and methods of teaching. The number of training institutions increased so that, in 1937, the percentage of trained teachers rose to 57. By now, a new generation of men and women, who had been brought up in elementary schools of a better type, formed the bulk of the teaching profession and began to exercise their influence towards a betterment in the methods of teaching. Kindergarten and object lessons were introduced; and even some activity came in through subjects like nature study, school gardening, agriculture, or handwork. There was, therefore, considerable improvement in teaching methods by 1937. But even at this time, the elementary schools continued to be mainly academic institutions which imparted a book-centred instruction, little related to the immediate natural and social environment of the child or to his future status in life.

It soon became obvious, however, that the situation could not be improved by tinkering of the type that had been attempted since 1901. A change in teaching methods does not create a change in the character and objectives of the educational system. It has to be the other way round. What the situation really needed, therefore, was a revolution in thinking, nothing less than a break with the past, and an intensive effort to evolve an educational programme that would be child-centred, activity based, and directly oriented to life. This was given to the country by Mahatma Gandhi in 1937 and is leading to a revolution in teaching methods as well.

#### REFERENCES

1. J.P. Naik: *History of the Local Fund Cess in the province of Bombay*, pp. 31-32.
2. *Progress of Education in India, 1897-1902*, p. 464
3. R.V. Parulekar, *Mass Education in India*, pp. 15-16.

---

## 5

---

### The Functional Primary School (1975)\*

---

The object of this paper is to examine how and why the primary school in India has become dysfunctional and to show how it can be made functional again to serve the cause of mass education.

#### THE BIRTH OF A MODEL

The primary school in India was designed, about 150 years ago, for a certain social situation and on certain assumptions which were valid in that situation. For instance:

- It was assumed (this was then perfectly true) that there was no adult resident in the community who could teach the proposed new curriculum of the school (i.e., the three R's, history, geography, science, etc.), and that it was, therefore, necessary to entrust the task exclusively to a trained professional teacher who would be a full-time paid public servant.
- Like the teacher, the student also was expected to be full-time and learning for five to six hours a day in the schools (with extra doses of homework) because there was so much to be learnt and the sooner and more thoroughly it was learnt, the better it would be for the child.
- As there was no concept of universal and compulsory education at that time, it was assumed that the parents would appreciate the value of the school for the future well-being of their child and that they would gladly feed, equip, and send him to school on a full-time basis. In fact, there was also a further assumption that the home would not make any demands on the child's time for its own

---

\*Literacy Discussion (Tehran); Vol. 6, No.2, 1975.

purposes, and that it would also give him such additional support as the school would demand.

- It was further assumed that the curriculum of the school, which had been prepared by the Government after considering what an average Indian ought to know to make him like an average Englishman, would necessarily be of interest to every child and would be meaningfully related to his own environment.

In short, the primary school began in urban areas, mainly for the children of the well-to-do upper and middle classes who were themselves educated and had appreciated the value of education, and who could feed, clothe, equip, and send their children to school on a whole-time basis. There was no concept of either universal education or compulsory schooling; and the objective of education was not so much to educate an Indian child to his own environment, as to convert him into an English child, except for race, blood, and colour.

#### THE MODEL RUNS INTO TROUBLE

There was of course nothing basically wrong in the original model of the primary school. In the circumstances of the period it could not have begun otherwise. It must also be admitted that the model did serve a useful purpose for several years; and nothing went wrong with the school so long as it was basically meant to be an institution for the urban well-to-do families. Even when the primary school entered the rural areas, no problems arose so long as it was run on a voluntary basis, and mostly for the well-to-do families.

Trouble, however, started when ideas of mass education or of compulsory primary schooling began to gather momentum about fifty years ago and the same institution of the primary school, designed 100 years earlier in an entirely different context, was extended to programmes of mass education, without any change in its structure, organisation, or content. As can be easily realised, this unimaginative decision started a host of troubles.

- Large numbers of parents who were illiterate, and who probably had no literate ancestors for several generations, did not see any purpose in the school and refused to send their children to it. Thus, for the first time, we became conscious of the problem of non-attendance, although it had always been there.

- Some others saw the school in a different light, as a place where children were taken care of for most of the day without any cost to the family, and therefore began to send their children to school when they were very young (say, six to eight years of age) and who were otherwise merely nuisances at home. But the same parents withdrew them from schools as soon as the children became old enough to work in or outside the family because the family finances needed such help. The school was thus converted into a free baby-sitting establishment and this created the intractable problem of dropouts which has since assumed grave proportions in every developing society.
- Like the parents, even the children from the poor rural families showed reactions to this model which were very different from those of the children from the urban upper or middle class families for whom it had been basically created. The young rural children from peasant families who now entered school found that their best assets were devalued: they could run, milk a cow, ride on a buffalo, climb a tree in a jiffy like a cat, recognise every tree in the neighbourhood, or call by name almost all kinds of birds, and so on, but these accomplishments had no respectability in the school and were even unwanted. On the other hand, the things they could not do (and saw little sense in) such as being able to speak the standard language with the correct accent, or learning about the shape of the earth, became major objectives of the school and placed them at a tremendous disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their compeers from the middle and upper class families. Thus began lags in learning, absenteeism, stagnation, and the other well-known ills, which arose from the one basic fact that the curriculum of the school was really 'inert' to the children of the poorer classes and did not stimulate or interest them adequately.

In short, the primary school of the 1850s which was a very functional institution within the framework of educating the children of the well-to-do classes in urban areas became, in the 1950s, a very dysfunctional institution because it was transplanted, without any change in its organisation, structure, or content, to work for the education of the poor masses in rural areas who lived below the poverty line. It is this dysfunctional primary school that has been the biggest problem in the lap of the



developing countries ever since they accepted the goal of universal primary education. All of us and UNESCO are trying to remove these dysfunctionalities of the primary school and several learned remedies, sanctioned by the prestige of 'research' and hallowed by the approval of 'experts' and high-level 'international seminars', have been proposed and tried; but if factual reports are to be believed, they have produced little tangible effect on the miserable situation. The million dollar question before us is: How can we make the primary school functional once again?

### TWO SOLUTIONS

It appears that the answers to this question fall broadly into two categories depending upon the diagnosis and the ideological position of the educationist concerned.

The first group of educationists hold that the model is right and that it need not, and should not, be changed. The solutions it offers to the problems into which the school has run are, therefore, somewhat on the lines given below:

- Why does not the State abolish poverty? If every parent is well-to-do and able to feed, clothe, equip, and send his child to school on a whole-time basis (and there is no reason why this should be impossible to achieve), the model will work perfectly without any change,
- If poverty cannot be abolished, why should not the State develop a programme of incentives? If the parent cannot equip the child, give free educational supplies. If he cannot clothe his children, give free uniforms. If he cannot feed them, provide school lunches. If he cannot afford to forego the earnings (or help) of his child, however meager, give a compensatory allowance to the family to neutralise the opportunity cost of educating the child; and so on.
- Why not devise special coaching programmes for these children from the poor rural families who do not find the curriculum (designed for the upper or middle class children), sufficiently relevant or interesting? All this talk of adjusting the rural school curriculum to the local environment is nonsense. We are a democracy and we insist that the rural children shall learn the same curriculum as that prescribed for urban boys. If they do not learn it as well in school time, provide special tuition.

The second group of educationists are those who start by asserting that the model is wrong and that we should create an alternative model or models which are equivalent (in the sense that they achieve the same educational results) but are not necessarily identical (in the sense that they insist on uniform curricula for all sorts of conditions) to suit our own needs and conditions. The simple assumption of this group is that models are made and unmade for people and not vice versa. Because of this fundamental difference, the solutions offered by this group of thinkers are also different. For instance:

- They argue that the abolition of poverty is desirable and should be vigorously attempted. But this is essentially a long-term affair and we cannot wait to universalise education until poverty is abolished. In fact, universalisation of primary education itself may well be an important means of abolishing poverty. It is, therefore, our duty to design a new model which we must, at any rate, use between now and the day when poverty is abolished.
- All this talk of incentives is often placed in the wrong perspective. Provision of free educational equipment on the school premises is important and should be undertaken. Fortunately, this is not a costly programme and can be immediately adopted. But free supplies of clothing and school meals are a different issue. These are very costly and the State will not be able to afford them. Even if it could, they are not educational but welfare programmes and should really be provided to every needy child, whether attending the school or not. It is also not certain that these incentives do lead either to better attendance or better learning (children often come to the school for the meal only). Let us not forget that, in the present financial conditions in India and in the developing countries generally, to make universal primary education dependent upon the large-scale provision of incentives is to write off universalisation for years to come.
- Universalisation of primary education does not mean the universalisation of middle class values and lifestyles. That would be disastrous. For instance, Shri E.W. Aryanayakam used to say that the beautiful handicrafts of India survive and earn valuable foreign exchange because we have failed to make primary education universal and some children at

least are left free to learn and practice these handicrafts in their homes. Let us realise that universalisation of primary education implies the creation of a new ethic based on work and not the universal diffusion of a white-collar, elitist culture.

- If a child cannot attend school full-time because he works at home, he should not be deprived of all education, and facilities for suitable part-time education should be created for him. Every child must learn, on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if necessary.

In short, the main argument of this group of thinkers is that the adoption of a new model suited to the needs of the poor rural communities will make it possible to universalise a more effective type of primary education within a short period and within a level of investment which the developing countries can afford at this stage. They, therefore, emphasize a change of the old model of the primary school which has now become dysfunctional and are prepared to consider not one but any number of alternative models which may be found to be necessary and feasible for educating the masses.

I have given up all hope of reconciling the views of these two opposing groups. No amount of argument seems to convince either one or the other (incidentally, I do not find that arguments really convince anybody of anything) and both the groups have continued to exist in India for at least forty years, ever since Shri R.V. Parulekar published his book *Mass Education in India* (1934) to represent the second point of view. While some hailed him as a great educator and a pioneer thinker, others identified him with the devil himself, and a Director of Public Instruction of those days suggested that Shri Parulekar and his book should be drowned in the Arabian Sea. Both sides claim virtue for themselves. The first group believes that it is the real champion of the poor who will not compromise on anything but the best, and the second group argues that one has to adopt a realistic and pragmatic approach in such cases, that 'better' cannot be allowed to become an enemy of the 'good', that 'some' education is better than 'none', and that it is in the larger interest of the poor to receive whatever education they can (by changing the model) immediately and continue to fight for still better education (which is really an endless process). It is, therefore, probably a question of one's faith that makes one decide which group one would like

to belong to; and this appears to be one of those basically irrational decisions which people always insist on describing as rational.

I do not know, dear reader, to which one of these two groups you belong or wish to belong, I belong to the second (I do not and cannot justify this affiliation just as I do not and cannot justify my colour or sex or height) and hold that the dysfunctional primary school can and should be converted into a functional one by changing the model suitably. If you also belong to the second group, you may find something of interest in what follows. If, on the other hand, you belong to the first group, please skip the pages and pass on to the next article.

#### THE CHANGES NEEDED

What are the major changes needed in the traditional model of the primary school to make it functional in a situation where primary education is to be universalised at an early date, even while the majority of the people are still poor and, in consequence, the resources available to the State for the development of this programme are also limited? These are briefly indicated below.

The existing primary schools may be regarded as a single-point entry, sequential, and full-time system of institutional instruction by full-time and professional teachers which tends to be rigid and inert to the bulk of the children from poor families. It is necessary to analyse each of the attributes in some detail.

#### SINGLE-POINT ENTRY

Ordinarily, a child is expected to enter the elementary system at about the age of six (or even five in some States) in Grade I. It is true that children below or above this prescribed age of first admission are also allowed to join Grade I. It is also true that children who have studied privately may be examined and allowed to join, according to their abilities, in a grade higher than the first. But such admission to under-age or over-age children in Grade I (or in grades other than first) are exceptions rather than the rule: and it would be correct to say that, for the average child, especially in the rural areas, there is only one age of entry, namely, six or five, and only one grade in which fresh admission can be given, namely, Grade I.

This system has two obvious advantages: (1) it tends to create a homogeneous age-group cohort in Grade I which tends to rise,

year after year, to successively higher grades; and (2) it makes classroom instruction comparatively easy for the teacher. But it has its disadvantages also. For instance, what happens to a rural child who does not get into Grade I at about the age of six? In practice, this child can never get into school again and will have to live and die as an illiterate adult. All that we can say to this child is, "Sorry, my boy. You have unfortunately missed the bus. But when you grow up, get married and have a child, bring him along when he is six and we shall be happy to admit him in Grade I." If, by some misfortune, his child also were to miss admission in Grade I at about the age of six, we are prepared to wait patiently for the grandchild. It is this approach of providing a single-point entry to the entire educational system that makes it so ineffective in practice.

What happens to a child who desires to learn at a little later age, say, 11 or 14? It is true that such a child can be, and is also, admitted to primary schools. But the admission is made invariably in Grade I and this grown-up child is required to sit along with other very young children, learn the same lessons, and at the same speed. This is usually very boring to this grown-up child who, more often than not, runs away from the school and becomes a 'dropout'. What such a child needs is specially organised classes where education is imparted through special techniques suited to his maturity. But there is no provision in our system for this purpose.

It is obvious that our educational system would gain infinitely if it were to provide, not a single-point entry at about the age of six, but multiple-point entries at different ages, say, 9, 11, or even 14. The desire to learn may spring up in the minds of children at any of these later ages; and our system should be elastic enough to admit them into schools which are specially organised and where instruction is imparted on lines which are appropriate to their needs and capacities. Such alternative channels of admission would bring into the school system large numbers of children who now remain out and add merely to the numbers of illiterate adults. It is also obvious that such a system would be far more effective from the point of view of the spread of literacy among the masses than the present model of a single-point entry in Grade I at about the age of six.

#### SEQUENTIAL CHARACTER

The existing schools are also a sequential system in the sense that

a child is expected to complete one class every year and to rise to the next higher class after passing the annual examination. There are, of course, large exceptions. Many children fail to pass the examination at the end of the year and are, therefore, detained in the same class as repeaters. The extent of this evil, generally known as stagnation, is very large in our system at present. On the other hand, a few children may complete two classes in a year and be given a 'double' promotion. But such cases are extremely rare. By and large, therefore, the system functions in a sequential manner and children rise every year from class to class.

The primary objective of this system again is to facilitate classroom instruction by grouping children of similar attainments together. This purpose is admirably served, no doubt. On the other hand, it does not meet the needs of children who begin late. For instance, it has been shown through practical experimentation that grown-up children of 11 or 14 years of age are able to complete the studies of Grade I-V in about two years. Very often, grown-up children of 14 to 18 years of age are able to complete the course prescribed for Grades I-VIII in a period of two-three years and pass the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination creditably. Programmes of this type are obviously very useful and suitable for conditions of a developing country such as ours. But they have never been developed, except in a few experimental projects conducted by well-meaning and forward-looking educationists.

#### FULL-TIME INSTRUCTION

Another important aspect of the existing schools is that they provide only full-time institutional instruction. As pointed out earlier, this does not create any problem for the well-to-do classes for whose children the system was basically devised. But it is extremely antagonistic to the interests of the masses who are so poor that their children are compelled to work at home or outside and to add to the meagre family budget. Every boy is generally required to work as soon as he grows up and becomes about nine years old: he works on the family farm, tends cattle, or goes out to earn some wages in whatever way possible. A girl is required to assist her over-burdened mother to look after the young children who keep continually coming in. It is impossible for these children to attend school on a whole-time basis; and that is why they either never go to school or generally drop out, sooner rather than later. These hard economic factors are the principal reasons

for the large wastage which now afflicts primary education and accounts for about two-thirds of it or even more.

This wastage can be overcome in a variety of ways. For instance, the standards of living of the common people may be so raised that they can send their children to full-time institutions. The society may provide cash grants to the parents of such children to compensate them for their foregone earnings and then compel to send their children to schools. Alternatively, a system of part-time education can be organised so that all such children, who are required to work in or for their families, may be able to earn as well as to learn. It is obvious that the first of the methods, however laudable, can only be a long-term solution. The second is financially beyond the reach of the government at this time and for years to come. The only practicable alternative, therefore, is the third, namely, to organise a large-scale programme of part-time education for working children. Today, our motto is that either the child attends school on a full-time basis or is compelled to drop out. This heartless system (heartless to the poor man's child) has no place in a country such as ours where the vast bulk of the people are poor. It should be replaced by another in which every child is required to attend school on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if necessary. The hours of part-time instruction in such a system can also be organised in a manner that would suit the working conditions of the children and enable them to educate themselves without interfering with the essential work which they must put in for their families.

#### EXCLUSIVE ORGANISATION OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Yet another aspect of the existing schools is that they utilise exclusively the service of full-time professional teachers. This is done in the name of standards and no one would quarrel with the attempt to utilise full-time professional teachers. However, exclusive dependence on this pattern creates several problems. The first is a continuing increase in costs because the inescapable consequence of such professionalisation is a rise in the salaries of teachers (which increases cost per teacher unit) and a continuous reduction in the teacher-pupil ratio (which increases cost per pupil). Moreover, the very cause of quality often suffers because of this emphasis. It has been suggested, for instance, that the standards in the primary schools would improve if they utilise local talent and teaching resources, e.g., a local carpenter or a tailor may be used to teach a craft in schools or a good local singer may

be utilised for teaching music. It is not necessary that such teachers should necessarily be qualified from the strictly professional point of view and it is also possible to make them good teachers through appropriate programmes of orientation. But such efforts are never made. The costs of primary schools may also go down if pupils themselves are utilised for purposes of teaching. In the traditional indigenous schools in India, for instance, the monitorial system was a common feature under which pupils were paired off and a senior pupil was required to take charge of instructing a junior pupil entrusted to his care under the general guidance of the teacher. Such a system or its variants can give excellent results, especially in single-teacher schools or in schools where it is not economically feasible to provide one teacher for every class. In several areas, it is also possible to use educated young persons to assist the teachers of local schools in educating the children of the community and pay them small allowances which would be extremely valuable in the local conditions, but which would, nevertheless, reduce the overall costs of education by a substantial extent. But these devices also remain unexplored. What is worse, whenever such proposals for the utilisation of non-professional teachers are put forward, the entire organisation of the professional teachers rises up in revolt and sees to it that they are neither adopted nor allowed to succeed.

#### NO RIGID DEMARCATION BETWEEN PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our primary schools have no pre-schools or creches attached to them. The most common work which girls from poor families are required to do is to look after young children. On the one hand, we are anxious to promote girls' education and organise a number of programmes to increase their enrolment. On the other, we do not permit girls to bring young children with them and request them to leave them at home before coming to school. Since this is impossible, the practice means only one thing: the girls are prevented from joining schools and there is a positive disincentive in the system against the spread of education among girls from poor families. Experiments have been tried, notably by the late Smt. Tarabai Modak, wherein small creches or pre-schools were attached to primary schools and were conducted by girls themselves under the general supervision of the teachers. The additional costs involved in the programme were marginal, but they succeeded very well in enrolling a large number of girls from

the poorer families. This elasticity of organisation is absent in the model that we have developed and, consequently, the development of education of girls from the masses is considerably hampered.

### CONTENT

The content of the primary education is at present determined by one main consideration, namely, that it should prepare a child for secondary education. There is also an over-emphasis on the uniformity of curriculum in all primary schools, urban as well as rural. The net result of these trends, as stated earlier, is to make it impossible to relate the curriculum to the local environment. The introduction of a single set of textbooks uniformly in all primary schools or of external examinations at the end of Grade VII or VIII also tends to standardise content and to make variations to suit local conditions almost impossible. It is necessary to give up all such trends to centralise authority in curriculum construction or evaluation and to give freedom to schools to adjust the curriculum to the local environment and to make evaluation depend mostly on internal assessment by the teachers themselves. This will make it possible to have a curriculum for every primary school which stimulates children and attracts the support of the parents. The school will then become an interesting place which parents will appreciate and the children would like to go to; and the major difficulties that arise in the present system from an inert curriculum will be eliminated.

It is thus obvious that the existing model of the primary school favours the well-to-do, whose children complete the primary course successfully (their main objective is secondary or higher education for which they look upon primary education merely as an inevitable stepping stone), and harms the interest of the masses, the bulk of whose children are converted into 'failures' and 'dropouts'. If primary education is to be made universal, the traditional model of the primary school should be radically modified on the following lines to make due provision for the education of the children of the masses:

- 1) The single-point entry system must be replaced by a multiple-point entry system under which it will be open for older children of 9, 11, or 14 to join the schools in separate classes specially organised for their needs.
- 2) The sequential character of the system must go; and it should be possible for older children to join the prescribed

courses at any time and also to complete them in much shorter period.

- 3) The exclusive emphasis on full-time institutional instruction should be replaced by a large programme of part-time education which should be arranged to suit the convenience of children who are required to work.
- 4) The exclusive emphasis on the utilisation of full-time professional teachers should go. An attempt should be made to utilise all the teaching resources available in the local community; and the service of part-time local teachers and even of senior students should be fully utilised for promoting instruction in the primary schools.
- 5) There should be no rigid demarcation between primary schools and pre-schools. Girls who are required to look after young children should be encouraged to bring the children to the school. These could be taken care of in pre-schools or creches attached to the primary schools, which should be managed by the girls themselves, by turns, under the guidance of teachers. This will provide a valuable service at the minimal additional cost and assist materially in the spread of education among girls from the poorer families.
- 6) Rather than try to introduce uniformity in curriculum which leads to rigidity, we should evolve an elastic and dynamic system in which there is considerable freedom of initiative, experimentation and innovation left to schools and to teachers and make every attempt to relate the curriculum to the local environment and to the needs, interests and aptitudes of the children so that their learning, learning to do, and aptitudes are developed.

This is essentially the message of non-formal education for improvement of the formal system; and these major structural changes in the traditional primary school should be carried out on the basis of highest priority. They alone can make the primary school functional once again and enable us to universalise primary education in the shortest time and at the least possible cost.

### THE INTERNATIONAL TREND

Should we introduce these changes in the traditional primary school in the developing countries only because they have limited

resources and because they have not yet been able to introduce universal primary education for their children? Or are these changes significant even to the developed countries of the world? It is interesting to know that the latter statement is also true and that this attempt to blend a large non-formal element with the traditional formal school system is the future trend of education in all the countries of the world, developing or developed.

The developed countries of the world have already made primary education universal for their children. Many of them have also made secondary education universal. The objective before most of them now is to create a system of lifelong education for all. From the point of view of this objective, they find that the existing educational system which lays an almost exclusive emphasis on formal education will have to be replaced by another in which there is a blend of both formal and non-formal elements. As the Report of the International Commission on Education, *Learning To Be*, observes:

The concept of education limited in time (to school stage) and confined in space (to school buildings) must be superseded. School education must be regarded not as the end but as the fundamental component of total educational activity, which includes both institutionalised and out-of-school education. A proportion of educational activity should be deformed and replaced by flexible, diversified models. (p. 233)

The changes in the traditional primary school which are being proposed here for the developing countries in order to help them to make primary education universal in the shortest time and at the minimum of cost are, therefore, exactly similar to those which the developed countries are now trying to introduce with the objective of providing lifelong education for all. These changes, therefore, may well be described as the future trend in world education—a trend which will bring the developing and the developed countries much closer together than at any time in the past. This is, therefore, the direction which we should now try to give to our efforts at educational reconstruction.

---

## 6

---

### A Report on the Commonwealth Conference on Non-formal Education for Development (February 1979)

---

A major event, since we went to the press last, was the Commonwealth Conference on Non-formal Education for Development held, in New Delhi, from 22 January to 2 February 1979. More than 150 delegates from all the countries of the Commonwealth participated. Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah was elected Chairman. The conference was inaugurated by Shri Morarji Desai, the Prime Minister of India. Dr. Robert K. Gardiner delivered the Keynote Address. Several reports on what different member States of the Commonwealth are doing in the field of non-formal education were presented at the Conference. The Conference divided itself into twelve Committees which presented 12 reports. The total documentation of the Conference was impressive, voluminous and useful. We propose to publish some of it in this and some later issues of the journal. Here we content ourselves with the reproduction of a few interesting experts.

Speaking on the concept of Non-formal Education, Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah said: Non-formal education, like some other negativistic terms, which all of us present at this Conference have heard about, and some of us have lived with and practised, non-formal education such as non-cooperation, non-violence, anti-apartheid, protestant, is a wide ranging, complex and powerful concept. I describe it as 'wide ranging' because it comprehends all learning outside of the formal system, and has no parameters of time and space. It can be classified for pre-school, unschooled and under schooled children in the age group

1-15 years and for youth and adults unschooled, under schooled or needing new additional skills, in the age group 15-60 years. Non-formal learning can also be classified by the learning content involved into those organised activities where the major emphasis is on general education, and also those where the content is mainly vocational. The institutions and agencies involved in non-formal education and training, by the order of the volume of activities undertaken, are federal, State, local and para-government departments/agencies bearing various development labels such as agriculture, health, labour and employment, information and broadcasting, rural development, social welfare, industry, education, etc., the political parties and their various cadres and organisations for youth, women, labour etc. universities and colleges, banks and public sector agencies, the private corporate sector firms, trade unions and a host of other voluntary organisations. Non-formal learning thus reaches out to pre-school education and provides training programmes for school and school and college drop-outs, the unemployed and underemployed, agricultural farm, animal husbandry, fishery, forestry workers, extension agents, health workers, family planning personnel, village level workers, illiterate adults and adults education instructors and supervisors, management personnel at various levels, factory workers, physically and mentally handicapped persons, scientists, engineers, technicians and university alumni.

Non-formal education is also a complex concept, and in this it is like development. It is complex in its learning content which has to be improvised for each group of clients. It is complex in the multiplicity and multimedia of learning that it uses, of which the teacher and the book is only one, and increasingly a marginal one; it is complex that its end products cannot be measured by pieces of paper called certificates, degrees and diplomas, but by such simple and tough criteria as income generation for the 500 million living below the poverty line; employment creation for the 60 million unemployed, under-employed and thinly employed; provision of protective food for the undernourished and malnourished 450 million children in our Commonwealth countries. It is a part of the total education system and in that sense we must delve into the why's and how's of the interaction and harmonisation of the various components of the education system

– the formal, informal and non-formal. But even more important and an even greater imperative is to conceive non-formal education as a part of the development system. It may be here that my bias as an economist is showing. For it is this indelible link of non-formal education to development, that has been its pole of attraction to me and many non-pedagogues like me.

What is even more important, non-formal education is a powerful concept. Its power stems from its being, like all education, the fountain source of knowledge which is power. But even more, non-formal education feeds back into our societies a rather grim and explosive power process. Non-formal education involves people – the poor discriminated and down trodden majority – organising themselves to end the state of injustice into which they have been forced to live. We can call this dialogue and action, we can call it conscientisation, we can call it mobilisation. In India we call it redistributive justice. It is the power of non-formal education, the power which it releases, so that the problems of interaction and harmonisation between the various forms of education, the danger of non-formal education becoming second class education for second class people, will be solved and dissolved in the structural changes it will bring about. Else, it is not non-formal education. Non-formal education is people's power, the power to change our society, to make it move towards the paths of justice, tolerance, understanding the charity and all its uncomfortable consequences for us, and all the rest like us, of the status quo.

The keynote Address of Dr. Gardiner was thought-provoking and set the tone for the Conference. Some extracts are given below.

#### REMOVAL OF POVERTY

Contemporary world opinion is that poverty is no longer necessary nor is it the inevitable lot of man. The scientific and technological achievements of our age reinforce the belief that it is possible to develop and sustain a poverty-free world. The key instrument for achievement of this objective is the application of knowledge and skills to resources at our disposal. However, there are limits to optimistic opinion because known natural resources are finite, the rate at which we are consuming them is high, some of them are not renewable, and the population of the world is

growing rapidly. To these physical limitations must be added human weaknesses and social and institutional constraints. I venture to suggest that life at all times has been a mixture of opportunities and risks not fully foreseen, as well as a challenge. The subject of this Conference accepts a challenge and indicates that opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills should be available to all sections of every community to enable them to make effective contributions to the fight for a better life in a better world.

#### SOME TASKS FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Mentioning non-formal education as a means to stimulate political and social awareness might alarm some people; but it is a legitimate function of adult education to deal with the realities of life. In studying economics, adult classes have been concerned with the lot of the underprivileged, the condition of life of the peasant, the struggles of trade unions, housing problems, factory conditions, and so on. In history, politics and world affairs non-formal education tends to take a human interest in socially and politically oppressed people and their struggles to liberate themselves. From my own observations, I know that in the UK workers education classes, in anti-colonial struggle are well-attended whether they be on India, the West Indies or Southern Africa. Even in dealing with literacy, technical and vocational subjects, adults recognise and value links between what they learn and their living experience. Apart from the precedents we know of, there is, surely, every justification for non-formal education not confining itself to vocational or material needs, but seeking the broadening of minds and the understanding of life.

Mobilisation of the masses of any given country means making sure that every citizen is equipped to make an effective contribution to national development. This is why non-formal education focuses on the underschooled and those who have never had any opportunity for schooling and training. In a modern society such ill-equipped persons are "marginal men" like shoeshine and messenger-boys, porters and beggars who engage in blind-alley occupations. As the computer automation, robotics and other labour saving devices spread, there is a danger that dead end occupations many increase so that more and more underschooled and untrained persons become economic and

social misfits who run the risk of being tools of the underworld or becoming members of it. In their own interest, they need to acquire skills, in the interest of the community they need to be more productive. Already, one problem of under-development is enforced idleness—with so many tasks to be performed, there are so few people equipped to perform them. There is a correlation between quality of a population in terms of skills an ability to produce and the prosperity of that population – current indices of economic progress include the percentage of literacy as well as the percentage of children of school age in school. In traditional societies the young follow their parents in the trades and activities of their rural community. This system of growing up placed an emphasis on conserving tried skill and values. It suited a society which changed slowly – almost imperceptible. The communities and the target groups at which non-formal education aims today are already overtaken by social and technological change. The gap between them and those who have access to modern skills keeps widening. Developing countries are made up of several sub-societies at different stages of modernisation—rural/urban, illiterate/educated, masses/elite, and so on. These differentiations cause conflicts of interest and place sections of a society at a disadvantage to one another. This is not to suggest that traditional systems do not have their own serious economic and social contradictions. Non-formal education by fostering informed opinion strengthens the weak and vulnerable elements in the struggle for survival.

#### NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR DIFFERENT AGE-GROUPS

As a result of the exodus of young parents from the rural areas, the need for non-formal education for the pre-school child is shifting to new growth centres. Some progressive employers provide day-care centres. Government Welfare Departments set up or encourage the setting up of child-welfare-cum-kindergarten centres near markets where mother leave their children during busy trading periods. There is also the formation of parents' associations which sponsor day-care centres. The advantages of these child-care activities include access to clinics, regular satisfaction of nutritional needs, promotion of hygienic habits, facilities for group games, and familiarisation with toys and a prelude to the use of mechanical gadgets and processes in modern



life. Such institutions however should be open to inspection to ensure that proper standards are maintained.

Proceeding age-wise, the next group that should be exposed to the benefits of non-formal education is that of the school-age child deprived of school. Though most developing countries have universal primary education on paper, the realities of the situation make it difficult for some of them to have even a 25 per cent enrolment. This means that about 75 per cent of young persons entering the labour force annually lack the knowledge, skill and attitudes necessary to make them productive citizens of their communities. The problems of this group would be most efficiently tackled by the provision of pre-vocational and apprenticeship training. Labour unions could well take an interest in the preparation of prospective members of their trades and ensure that trade tests are carried out at the end of their training period. Initiatives could be taken by job counselling officers.

Youth outside the school system, roughly between the age of 13 and 18, is the next group to consider in relation to non-formal education. A distinction should in theory exist between urban and rural groups, but in practice youths of these ages hardly stay in the villages and are mainly to be found in the urban, mining and industrial centres. They should be made literate and taught trades such as carpentry, masonry, metalwork, blacksmithery and repair of motors and machines as well as modern agricultural techniques. Again, the question arises concerning sponsorship and financing of these aspects of non-formal education. The problem of youth outside the school system affects primary and middle school leavers as well. The idea of terminal points within schooling system does not appear to be fully accepted and understood. Pupils from primary schools on taking the school leaving examination expect to enter secondary schools or teacher training institutions, and if they are not selected consider themselves failures. From secondary institutions they expect to enter university. Again, if they do not gain university entrance, they feel they have failed. This is a considerable source of wastage because the training of these young people equips for many jobs and they should in fact be considered in the same light as university students who fail to obtain their degrees. Too much money—private as well as public—has been invested in these students for them to be discarded by a system which has no bridge

between formal qualification and real job requirements. At present, since only a small proportion of school entrants reach the university level, a large number of frustrated persons are thrown on to the labour market each year.

Because of the literacy, nature of the school curricula, in most developing countries young people lack useful skills like book-keeping, shorthand, office procedure and other requirements for secretarial and clerical work. As part of a process of vocationalising formal education, school leavers as well as dropouts should have access to on-the-job training in practical skills needed in industry and modern life. Chambers of Commerce and Labour make amenities available to supplement the school leavers and other youth. Some countries like Ghana, Kenya and Botswana have attempted to provide special training and opportunities for gainful employment to unemployed young people. Brigades have been established for builders, for agricultural workers on state farms, and for construction workers on roads, drainage and well-digging. The intention was that after the members of these brigades had acquired skills and experience they could enter the labour market or be self-employed. The result of the brigades scheme has been rather disappointing, as most of them have continued as para-statal organisations and their members have remained permanent wage-employees.

#### NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Mass education and community development have given more coverage to girls and women than the formal school system has ever done. In fact, it has brought girls and women into the very centre of integrated rural development programmes. The UNECA has established a special programme entitled "Women in Development" and a number of African governments have modelled portions of their national development plans on it. The thinking behind this has been summed up by a Catholic missionary who has worked in Ghana for over 30 years: "All civilisation stems from leisure: Women should have the time and the energy to devote to bring up their children; in an ideal world too, their daughters should receive as much education as their sons, so that in time they will be able to impart this knowledge to their own children."

"No society has flourished without a degree of female emancipation. There will be no betterment until there is water at every doorstep."

Nowadays women's tasks are more clearly defined – family health, food and nutrition and home management; these being key elements in integrated rural development it is possible for special classes to be arranged to supplement whatever training and experience they get at home. In West Africa, women traders are actively engaged in marketing, commerce and home industries. Because there were few facilities for vocational training, the centres established by Social Welfare and Community Department caught on not only in Ghana, but in many other parts of Africa, in offering courses in catering, food processing, secretaryship and accountancy. Apart from courses and vocational training centres, especially designed for women and girls, all adult and extra-mural classes are also open to them, as well as political and social organisations. In West Africa, market women participate effectively in elections and other political activities. A degree of basic education has become essential for them so that they may be able to exercise their vote knowledgeably, fill in their tax returns, keep their books, keep bank accounts, and keep in touch with the world at large.

#### BASIC EDUCATION

Since the 1940s there has been intense international concern to eliminate illiteracy from the world. Leading the anti-illiteracy campaign has been UNESCO's one of the major objectives and whose General Conference passed a resolution considering "the illiteracy of almost a thousand million of the world's inhabitants to be a disgrace to all mankind" and inviting the secretary General to provide for a considerable acceleration of the campaign against illiteracy, possibly contemplating a UNESCO Literacy Decade. UNESCO launched a largescale Experimental World Literacy Programme aimed at one million adults, but its results were disappointing and the experiment has been considerably de-emphasized.

Doubts have gradually arisen about the claims made for literacy as a key to modern knowledge and a tool for breaking the isolation and backwardness of rural communities. Literacy

campaigns were found to be subject to dramatically high proportion of dropouts and even successful completers of literacy courses often relapsed into illiteracy – perhaps because of unavailability of sufficient reading material relevant to their needs and interests. It is now agreed that literacy is also essential to the goals of adult education for example extension services, vocational training, cooperatives and trade unionism. A reappraisal of the claims of literacy has been made and as a result UNESCO's emphasis has been shifted from literacy to what is called "basic education" – an attempt to provide a functional, flexible and low-cost education for those whom the formal system cannot reach or has already by-passed. Basic education is expected to satisfy minimum learning needs for individuals as a threshold level for participation in economic, social and political activities.

The change of emphasis has removed one of the psychological and real barriers adults encounter in trying to "adopt" modern behaviour and attitudes. Adults without illiteracy inhibitions tend to learn and to put what they learn into action, much faster than young persons. They draw on their experience to watch for and avoid pit-falls. The substance of "basis education" can be communicated to and inculcated in adults faster and more effectively orally and in their own language – a feature noted by the International Commission on the Development of Education in its approach has called attention to drama, poetry, music and dance, not only as subjects but as media for non-formal education.

#### THE CHALLENGE

It seems that non-formal education for development is essentially an ideological or evangelical effort to create a responsive mass movement and this calls for skills as well as commitment and dedication.

We shall now give a few observations and recommendations of the Conference (one from each Committee).

#### Committee I: Motivation

Non-formal education can be effective only when it is actively supported by the community. To motivate the community to support such programmes, it is important to involve the community at all stages from planning to implementation. The

community should identify the needs of its members, advise on the details of the programme, provide facilities and volunteers for running the programmes and participate in their evaluation. When the community is aware of its needs and is willing to meet these needs through non-formal education, it can mobilise its members and resources for the success of these programmes.

In order to motivate the maximum number of participants, programmes of non-formal education should be relevant, flexible and interesting. They ought to be linked to the needs and aspirations of the learners and the society they are meant to serve. They should be embedded in the local milieu and employ local materials and talents. All programmes should be flexible, elastic and provide from alternatives. There should be proper planning and materials for follow-up, to ensure retention of skills. Non-formal education programmes should be fully supplemented and supported by teaching aids, mass media and libraries.

#### **Committee II: Children Outside Schools**

Who are the children who are out of schools today? With a few exceptions, they are the majority of the child-population in developing countries. Even in developed countries they appear to be a growing minority. For example, in India the pattern is roughly as follows: Of every 100 children attaining the age of five, 20 are not enrolled in any school. Of those who do enroll, 40 will have left school before the age group reaches Class V (the end of their primary school stage). Of the remainder, only 20 will go to high school, seven will pass school-final, and not more than three will enter institutions of higher education, either academic or vocational.

Besides socioeconomic and cultural reasons, children become dropouts, push-outs or left-outs of schools, for a number of other reasons. Some find difficulty in coping with the requirements of the curriculum; others find the curriculum irrelevant in that it does not help them to learn the skills they need in life. Some drop out because their families are so poor that they have to work. In some areas, learning facilities are not available or are inadequate, or the teacher-pupil ratio militates against effective teaching and learning. Additionally, parents and children tend to be indifferent to education in formal schools because of lack of

employment opportunities. Besides, children who leave school do so because their lives are made miserable either by the constant experiences of failure or by indifference or mockery due to class distinctions and physical disabilities.

#### **Committee III: Illiterates**

The importance of the non-formal education worker in helping to achieve the objectives of the non-formal education programmes needs to be recognised. The personality, style and approach of the worker is particularly important, when the programme is aimed at illiterate and poor people. In this context the non-formal education worker should be a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher or instructor. Although it is tempting to draw profile of an ideal non-formal education worker, most programmes use whoever is available. These workers may include government employees of various kind who have had no training in adult education. They may also be voluntary workers who wish to make a contribution, and key people in the community such as carpenter or a mechanic.

Some of the roles which these persons are required to perform can be listed as follows:

- a) Identifying and motivating prospective adult learners.
- b) Organising resources, staff and materials relevant to the programme
- c) Helping in content development
- d) Using and adapting different methods to support learning
- e) Organising the learning situation that is the place, the people, time and the materials
- f) Communicating with the participants to facilitate learning, helping participants to articulate their own needs.
- g) Assessing the effectiveness of their own programmes.

In order to perform their roles effectively, there is a need to design appropriate training programmes. These should take into account the background with which the facilitators come, and the background of the groups with which they are required to work. The commitment of the teacher to a non-formal education programme is also a very important factor because in the absence

of this commitment a programme of non-formal education cannot be certain of success.

#### **Committee IV: Research and Evaluation**

It is necessary here to distinguish between different types of research that have relevance for non-formal education programmes.

- 1) The most commonly known is "traditional research" that consists of surveys, KAP, (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) studies and other formal types of social science research. Universities and research organisations are generally involved in this type of research. Basic and Applied Research is necessary to inform better planning and organisation of non-formal education programmes. Interdisciplinary research by the different university departments would be particularly relevant and needs to be encouraged and supported.
- 2) "Action" or "feedback" research, on the other hand, has practical applications and has been defined as "the systematic study, incorporated in an operational programme, the results of which are feed back directly and immediately to the operational staff, to help them to improve the effectiveness of their on-going activities" (Garforth and Warr). This is one type of 'action' research. The other type is more akin to 'participatory research'.
- 3) "Participatory", "anthropocentric" or "activist" research refers to efforts to develop research approaches which involves those persons who are the expected "beneficiaries" of the research. The term deliberately focuses on involvement of those who are traditionally the researched in formulation, collection of data and interpretation of information. Advocates of participatory research believe that the process of research, besides helping to achieve educational objectives should itself educate. It should be a learning process that is based upon variety of approaches with an emphasis on dialogue, discussion interaction, collective analysis and action. Furthermore, it should not be convenient to the clientele and relevant to life, but should also be of immediate benefit.

Non-formal education programmes should draw from the main strengths of each type of research.

#### **Committee V: Multimedia Communication**

The media with the greatest potential for bringing about significant changes in society by means of mass campaigns are newspaper, correspondence education, radio and television. Newspapers, particularly rural newspapers which appeal to rural people in way that national papers do not, have played a vital role in community development, and Kobina Asiedu, in his paper "Continuing Education for New Literates," describes how they help to provide the free flow of information of items that are of interest to rural people such as agriculture, home and family life, education and other activities. Rural newspapers, especially where they provide bolder print than usual, provide newly literate adults with a useful source of reading material that exercises their functional reading skill.

#### **Committee VI: Interaction of Formal and Non-formal Education**

It is imperative that formal and non-formal education should become complementary. Experience suggests that this will not come about spontaneously. Change is the more likely as a result of pressures from society at large, such as the financial constraints mentioned above, the mismatch of formal academic qualification and job opportunity, and the inability of the formal system to cater for the needs of those sectors of the community whose education is mostly confined to traditional forms and to those who, for various reasons, benefit from only limited or occasional school attendance.

Many countries are now seeking to create an education system which will provide relevant learning experience throughout the life of each individual. Conceptually this has been expressed as recurrent education. In such a system it would be normal for periods of work either to alternate with periods of education or be enriched by periods of part-time education. This education would not terminate at any particular age. This enlargement of educational opportunity, together with the increased flexibility offered for individuals should also have regard to stages in personal development, status, abilities and ambitions. We believe that only if we eventually succeed in offering a wide range of

educational opportunity in a recurring way will the integration of formal and non-formal education be fully realised.

For most countries, this idea is on a distant horizon, and although it is no less significant for that, a more immediate need is to search for forms of interaction which will provide for short-term improvements in educational provision. Thus, there is a need to help those who had been unable to gain access or have had very limited access to any form of education, to recognise that change in their style is possible and that there are means by which they can act to facilitate such change.

#### **Committee VII: Continuing Education for New Literates**

Literacy is relevant to people's lives because it is supportive to communication, for example, an extension worker may contact more farmers in far less time, if the farmers are literate. Experience shows that there are tremendous improvements in productivity in craft, if literacy is applied. This is because the literate craftsmen can maintain consistency in pattern and measurements. Even farming yields have improved among new literate farmers. Further more, literacy is relevant to health education. Finally, literacy is relevant to attitudes – the literate is in a better position to understand change and possesses a cultivated and more reliable working tool than memory. Where appropriate, post literacy programmes should be conducted in the national language; to enable the new literate to increase his capacity to participate fully in national life. The object of literacy is to enable the adult to continue his education - and to do this, he must be literate in the national language. In other words, literacy is a working tool to open doors to continuing education.

As non-formal education programmes for adult illiterates and new literates must be diverse, in order to be need-based, there is the problem of identifying the needs of each group and sub groups. Non-formal education should, therefore be flexible and accommodate somewhat heterogeneous groups, rather than expect completely homogenous groups, rather than expect completely homogenous groups, as is the case in formal education.

Programmes of non-formal education should be primarily directed towards raising the socioeconomic conditions of adult

illiterates and new literates since these groups frequently constitute the poorer sections of society.

There are some fine distinctions between programmes for raising the standard of living, improving the quality of life, providing basic needs and generating employment. These programmes are of the same genre, but are directed in different countries towards different aspects of social and economic development.

Cultural activities play a vital role in non-formal education. Drama, music, lyrics or songs or dances may be used for motivating participants, or they may be used as the vehicle for conveying messages. Many of the different countries of the Commonwealth have their own cultural forms of communication and entertainment which could galvanise with new energy non-formal education programmes. In fact, non-formal education programmes could attempt sometimes to revive the dying forms of traditional media.

#### **Committee VIII: Non-formal Education in Other Development Services**

Indigenous and traditional education offers considerable untapped potential for development oriented non-formal education. On the one hand, modern knowledge and skills can be woven into traditional education structures, such as the apprenticeship systems of master craftsmen. On the other hand, beneficial traditional knowledge and skills can be transmitted using modern methods and structures, for instance, by involving those with useful expertise in the work or community learning centres and in extension programmes. Either way, it is important to the clients of such non-formal education that programmes maintain a balance between the familiar and the new, in order that at least some aspect of what they are experiencing is recognisable and can be identified with. The educational methods used by extension workers, especially, would be selected for their effectiveness in conveying useful and relevant information, keeping in mind the clients' own perceptions of their needs.

Among pre-literate communities the oral tradition and oral communication is most significant. This must be taken into account in any non-formal education endeavours. There are many

expression of this oral base in the cultural fabric of local communities – village bards and storytellers, traditional plays and songs, community singing – which can serve as channels for non-formal education programmes.

Equally, important is the influence of natural community leaders who can either promote or obstruct development efforts. Given the right approach and orientation, they can have a far reaching educational impact.

#### **Committee IX: Non-formal Education for School Dropouts**

It is important that programmes provided should make it possible for the so called dropouts to join the school system if and when necessary. A crucial aspect is that programmes should aim at making the dropout a productive and happy member of his community.

For those among them who have had some formal education, the desire to re-join the formal stream of education may provide the basic motivation for participation in non-formal education where re-entry programmes can be developed to help them overcome their deprivation. To back up development of this kind of non-formal education, it is essential that non-formal education.

#### **Committee X: Adult Learning Programmes : Selected factors and Comparisons**

Non-formal education should be directed towards creating awareness of social conditions and educating people about their country, history, government and development, creating critical awareness has taken on a much deeper meaning and educational programmes for "liberation" are appearing in many developing nations, particularly in Latin America, but these programmes have not yet taken root in non-formal education, in many Commonwealth countries. There may be some merit in comparing success and failures in such programmes and investigating why these programmes have not been actively promoted in Commonwealth countries. Non-formal education programme should be distinguished from mass literacy campaigns, where the aim is largely to provide literacy skills. Non-formal education has wide objectives, related to development, of which literacy forms a component. Initially, stages in development programmes can be

carried out without literacy or without any felt need for literacy, but it should be included when motivation is aroused or felt needs for literacy are perceived by participants. After functional literacy programmes have been successfully completed, there is a need to devise appropriate materials.

#### **Committee XI: Programmes of Non-formal Education for Women**

The role of women in the development process is underrated and ill-developed, constrained by social and economic factors which vary from country to country. If the individual and collective potential of women is to be fully realised, the constraints must be examined openly and without cynicism. Intimate and sensitive questions must be explored, in a manner that expresses a tolerance of the sincerity of the values and viewpoints of those whose behaviour patterns are targets for change. In programmes of non-formal education for women, the search is for justice, dignity and the right and opportunity to participate in development.

Many factors militate against higher participatory rates in educational activity, the most forceful of which are cultural and economic. In remote rural areas the problem of access to educational provision is also significant. In 1970, it was estimated that 60 per cent of the world's illiterates were women, and in Asia only 51 per cent of girls of the age-group 6-11 were enrolled in educational institutions in 1976.

Training programmes are usually male oriented; vocational education by-passes women. In some countries women are seen as a reserve of cheap labour, to undertake jobs not sought by men at relatively low rates of payment. The provision of skill training in the form of apprenticeship on the job training, extension provision, and the establishment of productivity improvement and income generating programmes is, in many countries, invariably the preserve of men.

Non-formal education that exists for women tends to concentrate on nutrition, childcare and home-economics, sometimes failing to recognise the felt needs to target groups. A typical example is the provision of such a programme for rural women within the Indian Community Development Programme through two decades, when rural women also needed instruction in improved agricultural techniques. These programmes often

have to overcome male dominated local bodies, with limited facilities and finance, circumstances which may hinder the motivation of would be participants. Motivation becomes easier when women and men recognise the usefulness, and particularly the economic value, of such programme.

A major cause for this communication gap between programme planners and women's needs is the widely prevalent and dominant social attitude that sees a woman's role as confined to home making and child nurturing, ignoring the multiple production and distributionary roles played by women in rural areas and among the urban poor, as well as the managerial roles played by women in elite groups. In some cases this attitude is reinforced by tendency to regard women's capacities as inferior, so that even in their work-life they are considered as fit for only low skilled, low productivity and low status occupations, which do not call for much intellectual aptitude or high proficiency skills, but are basically extensions of household skill into the labour market. Conventional vocational training programmes for women often emphasize tailoring, embroidery, other household, crafts some traditional handicraft which do not call for modern technological know-how and secretarial practice in urban areas. Training in managerial skills, accounting procedures, and courses which introduce women to modern technology and new skills, are often marginal in non-formal programmes.

A consequence of this bias is the marginal participation of women for the poorer sections of the population, rural and urban, in non-formal education programme. These women, both adults and young, are engaged full-time on earning their livelihood, with little time and less interest in any form of education and a general feeling of powerlessness, against economic and social structures which appear hostile or indifferent to them. Some of them are compelled to turn to degrading occupations, or options which offer less return for much harder labour.

A second consequence is the wide-spread acceptance by women of these discriminatory attitude, a device to rationalise their lack of options, to make a virtue out of the necessity to avoid frustration and despair that comes from individual rebellion against such powerful beliefs and institutions.

One of the major objectives as well as essential strategy for any policy of educating women for development, must be to combat these social attitudes and to promote the basic value of justice and dignity for women, and their right to participate in economic, social and political development. It is important to specify these objectives in order to avoid lapsing back into a purely welfare approach to women's education.

The welfare approach may result in a divorce between educational inputs and the development needs of women, families and the country, thereby reinforcing discriminatory and derogatory attitudes and practices. It also adds to women's vulnerability to exploitation. There is the frequent incidence of men and boys in poorer families seeking educational and economic advance for themselves, while the family is supported by the earning of the women, old and young. This is one of the important causes of girls dropping out of school or of not entering school at all and partially explains the widening gap in the education of boys and girls.

#### **Committee XII: Coordination and Cooperation**

Coordination, cooperation, organisation and finance, and means for the effective use of resources, they are not ends in themselves. Coordination is needed to avoid wasteful overlapping and especially to ensure that non-formal education interacts effectively with other development changes. Organisation is necessary to proceed coherently and effectively whether at the village or national level.

Coordination and cooperation exist in intention with several key elements of non-formal education and development although they are also interdependent. The goal cannot be to eliminate tensions, but to understand and resolve them. In other words, the aim of coordination and cooperation should be unity but not uniformity. However, when we are considering strategies for effective coordination and cooperation, it is necessary to realise mutuality of interest rather than merely to avoid conflict.

The task, then, is to effect coordination and cooperation so that agencies and government departments involved in non-formal education have unity of purpose in order that they agree on their objectives.

We shall conclude this note an extract from the Valedictory Address of the Chairman which summarise the achievements of the Conference:

In my opinion, there are three broad carry-overs from this Conference: (1) A set of ideas; (2) a detailed programme; and (3) human relationship.

### Ideas

The first broad carry-over from the Conference is a set of ideas; some old and some new, but all with a greater clarity and precision. First, we have realised that Non-formal Education is like development, we once thought development was increased GNP, we once thought that education was what happened within the four walls of the school or university. We now know that development is reducing poverty and unemployment and fighting inequalities of which poverty and unemployment are but an out-flow. We now know, somehow, that the poor, the deprived, the backward, the socially weak have got left out of our schools, and it is their learning, not what happens in the school, which is education and it is to describe this socially and humanly important learning system that we have coined the phrase 'Non-formal Education'.

Second, we have grappled with the issue of the politicality of our mandate as development educators. What is political in our mandate? Here I have noticed a number of tendencies. I begin with, as I found in UNESCO. I detected a trend here too that when we do not like something or someone, we say it he/she is political; we recall we are educators, and therefore we should not be concerned with this unclean thing, called the political issue. On the other hand we have also come to the uncomfortable realisation that education is not politically neutral. It is part of, an active supporter to, and a faithful reflector of the status quo society. If the status quo in our society is predominantly unequal and unjust, and is increasingly so, education of the poor in such a society. If the society is moving in an egalitarian direction, then that is what education will do and that is where non-formal education can and will flourish. And so it has been borne in upon us that we had better examine our positions. We agree that there is a need for

common political consensus where we have multiple political parties, or a concordance between the party and the people, where we have the uni-party system in either case or both, what emerges is the political will for non-formal education, which needs to get on the national political development map of the country and play its role.

Third, there has been an epistemological exercise, as we have gone about clarifying, defining and re-defining certain new concepts — non-formal education, what it is when expressed positively — development services, what they are and how they are part of non-formal education — democratisation of education and participatory research, which calls for something more than a pure academic stand which will not be adequate, as there must be a non-academic, personal, social and political commitment, which is an identification with the poor, somewhat like what Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and many such great spirits in other countries of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean have lighted for us in their lives.

A fourth idea is that education is not teaching which is instrumental, and not the only instrument at that, but learning. This is the conceptual bedrock on which non-formal education lies. In the non-formal education programme for all but very young children, it is the learning techniques, it is the capacity to learn how to learn, it is the learning and result which judges it a success or a failure. The teacher in non-formal education disappears and is replaced by the first learner, the *primus inter pares* in learning the facilitator, the animator, the worker. This applies also to the non-formal education programme for children. Non-formal education replaces the vertical hierarchical arrangement which education has come to represent by a horizontal structure in which all are learners, all learning from each other.

### Programmes

The second broad carry-over from this Conference is the Programme that we have forged.

I have no hesitation in describing this programme as a qualitatively a very high level one, which I have rarely come across in conferences of this size. We have on the basis of quite detailed and high-level discussion, carefully prior preparation by



our resource persons and the secretariat and by a process of mutual consultation at this Conference, established this high-level qualitative non-formal education programme for development. This programme which is before us is worked out at various levels : spatially at the mini-micro village or small town, micro which is the district and macro which are the State and Centre levels – age wise at our varied clients, children adolescents, adults, sex-wise and women and girls – in terms of occupation, farmers, fishermen and dairymen, cottage and small industry workers, technically involving problems of entry and re-entry, certification and rewards, co-ordination between formal and non-formal systems, between non-formal education and development, using teaching technology and learning media in single, group or multimedia combinations – and at all levels – the relations between all these and employments on the one hand and cultural life and spiritual values on the other.

For me, the innovation of this programme that we have adopted is the programme of education of the school dropout, about which we in the Commonwealth and in the Third World generally have little or no expertise. We have built up a long and impressive experience and tradition in the area of non-formal education for adults. We know nothing, and we are at the starting stage as far as non-formal education of the school age group, the dropout the push-out and the left-out, is concerned. This is reflected in the programme which we have adopted. Its weakest link is the non-formal education of the school drop-out, but it is also a link charged with tremendous potential and energy, because it is for the first time that we have decided to make a start in this and gain experience. Taking the age group up to year 18 and using UNESCO statistics, I compute that the developing Commonwealth countries ought to have 200 million children in school against the 120 million who are the drop-outs, the push-outs and left-outs in the developing Commonwealth countries. It is in the learning facilities for this group of the 120 million deprived future citizens of our countries that non-formal education for school dropouts involved us. In the past we assumed that only if we can make our school more attractive, if we can improve its curriculum, make the teacher sympathetic and his teaching methods relevant, if we can feed the children at mid-day and give them free books, we can get them all in the schools.

We have tried all this in Asia (we have tried it in India), Africa, the Caribbean, and it has still left us with the problem of 120 million children not been in our schools, when they ought to be. It is like having built a house to keep a family of seven out in the sun and rain, but the shape of the house keeps four of the family simultaneously out in the sun and rain. And so, the programmes that we have thrown of here for education of this group is called non-formal education of the dropouts. It is weak because, as I have said, we have little expertise and experience in this area. It is static because we are just making a start, but it make urgent and explosive demands on us, because it concerns our children our young and their learning.

The second insistent demand of the programme is that its calls on us repeatedly to cooperate amongst ourselves within the country between countries bilaterally, trilaterally and multilaterally, among developing Commonwealth countries, with the Commonwealth Secretariat, as its focal point, on various means and methods to push this programme forward and accelerate its execution. We have watched with fascination Jamaica offering to join other countries in developing education research and training programmes that would spread over all the Commonwealth continents. We have also admired the offer of Australia to modernise and computerise and documentation services which can save non-formal education in the Commonwealth. May of us have asked that India, which seems to have everything in the way of problems as I said in my opening address, as well as being a moving exhaustive and sophisticated laboratory of solutions and attempted solutions in non-formal education should be the concrete embodiment of this cooperation amongst ourselves that we are seeking for. In this regard the wise comment of the Commonwealth Assistant Secretary General on the way forward for us to realise this decision is apposite. It is only then that in unity and in co-operation with each other that we will each become stronger, see more clearly our problems and avoid collective pitfalls and failures that this real meaning of Commonwealth cooperation will be realised.

#### HUMAN ENCOUNTERS

The third outcome of the Conference is the personal friendship we have formed, the human encounters that we have enjoyed and

the human visages that are enshrined in our minds that will be the lasting effect of this rendezvous. I have always found that when all else is forgotten, the resolutions and recommendations that we have approved, the reports that we have adopted, the minutes of the only thing that is left is the human relationships the unforgettable friendships that we have formed and the human faces we will carry back with us.

And so we go home now to our universities, offices and institutions. The hopes with which we started this Conference expressed in the Secretary General and Robert Gardiner have now been concretised in the programmes we take home with us. On its full, free and faithful execution depends the development of the developing Commonwealth countries. That is the call that I place before you as we now part. We will never be parting as we answer, as we must, this call of non-formal education for development; in that sense, our tasks begin anew today.

---

## 7

---

### Non-Formal Education of the Out-of-School Youth (Reprinted in 1996)\*

---

#### NEED FOR SIGNIFICANCE

Investment in education is necessarily long-term and begins to yield results after a generation and, in some cases, even after a longer period. Developing countries, however, are pressed greatly for time; and hence an important issue is educational programmes which can yield quicker and almost immediate results. If such programmes can be identified and implemented, those developing countries that will get a much better and quicker return for their investment in education will stand most to benefit.

Several programmes of this type can be suggested: adult literacy, on-the-job training of industrial workers, agricultural extension, and so on. But of all these, probably the most significant and far-reaching would be a crash programme for the education of young persons in the age-group 15-25. The size of this group is large, about 25 per cent of the total population. Its members are generally alert, inquisitive, impressionable and capable of being inspired by emotional commitments to service of the people and the country. As educands, therefore, they offer rich and potential material that is much easier to handle than either children of younger age or adults. What is more important, the cost of an educational programme for them is comparatively less (for such education is necessarily part-time) and its returns immediate and effective because these young persons will become active and influential members of the society in five to ten years.

---

\*Education and social change (1996), Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2.

If society had funds enough to provide only about eight years of universal education for every individual, what would be the period of life in which these funds could be invested? This is one of the most fascinating problems in educational planning. Some suggest the age-group 3-10 and also make out a strong case for it on psychological and physiological considerations. Others would vote for the age group 6-14, an age-group that our Constitution has also identified for providing free and compulsory education. But there are yet others who would plead for the age group 14-21, especially in developing countries, on the grounds that the costs of educating this group would be smaller and the results quicker and more effective. It is neither possible nor necessary to arbitrate between these different viewpoints. We as a nation have made our choice and have decided that the main thrust of our educational effort should be with the age-group 6-14. There is no need to alter this decision. But what we must do is supplement it by a largescale crash programme for the age-group 15-25, which includes the age-group 14-21. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that a massive programme for the education of this age-group should be developed during the seventies. The next three years should be fully utilised for organising pilot projects on a fairly big scale and for building up the necessary expertise, training of personnel, and production of materials. The programme should then be given a big place in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

#### CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE PROGRAMME

A small proportion of the young persons aged 15-25 are undergoing full-time education at present at different levels - some at the primary, a majority at the secondary, and some at the university stages. But, taken all in all, the enrolment of this age-group in all categories of educational institutions does not exceed about 10 per cent of their total population. No proposals are made here regarding the education of this small group already enrolled in schools and colleges. The normal programmes of educational reform would take care of their needs. But what we are concerned with most, in this paper, is the development of an educational programme for the out-of-school youth who form the other 90 per cent of the age-group and who are at present without any educational facilities whatsoever. It is for them—and they form

about 18 per cent of the total population—that a large-scale educational programme has to be developed on a war footing.

The content and character of this programme will obviously depend upon educational attainments and needs of these young persons. Some of them may have completed secondary education and a few would even be university graduates. A much larger number would have received some primary education and may be expected to be literate with varying degrees of other educational attainments. But, during the next decade at any rate, a little more than half would be those who have not been to school at all or who left school too early to have attained functional literacy. The programmes to be developed for this group would therefore be at various levels for a large proportion, at the primary level with an emphasis on functional literacy. But for another much smaller and more significant group, the education required would, in its content, be at the secondary level. A small minority of these may even need education at the university level.

It would, however, be wrong, to assume that continuing general education alone would be strong enough to attract and hold these young persons and meet their needs. General education will be a necessary component of the new programme, no doubt. But by itself it would not have the necessary vitality. It must be remembered that most of these out-of-school youth are workers, engaged in some activity that enables them to earn a living or to help their family to make both ends meet. Even though they are technically non-workers, they are sharing full responsibilities of the normal work in their families. The focus of their interest is, therefore, vocational; and what will attract them most is the prospect of improving their present vocational skills so that they can earn a little more, or of learning some new vocational skills that will enable them to improve their economic status. A strong vocational element will, therefore, have to be built into all educational programmes proposed to be developed for this young group.

Given this strong vocational core, it will be possible to build several other educational elements around it that by themselves would not be strong enough to attract and retain these young persons. The first, as stated above, is general education. The second important component would be family life education,

including family planning. Most of the persons in this age-group would be married, especially in rural areas, and a programme of family life education will interest them most and would also be extremely beneficial. It is also obvious that it is this group, that is entering the procreative stage of life, that needs to be exposed to education in family planning. Unfortunately, the family planning worker does not reach them or become effective with them for sheer absence of a continuing channel of communication. The chances of the family planning programme succeeding and becoming effective are therefore the largest if it is operated as a part of a comprehensive educational programme for out-of-school youth.

Two other important educational elements can also be added with advantage. The first is the recreational and cultural interest of youth, and the second is their willingness, or even eagerness, to participate in meaningful programmes of nation-building or social service.

It is thus proposed that what these young persons need is a mix of several educational elements - a mix that will have a strong vocational core round which will be built up other important educational interests, such as continuing general education (including functional literacy, where necessary), family life education (including family planning), promotion of recreational and cultural pursuits, and participation in programmes of social service or national development. The nature of the mix will vary from group to group, and even in the same group, from time to time. The success of the programme will largely depend upon the manner in which its organisers are able to visualise and provide the precise mix that a given group needs at a particular moment.

It must also be pointed out that this will essentially be a programme of part-time education because most of the persons to be educated are employed in one way or another. Those who are unemployed and are able to join on a whole-time basis will have two options: to join any existing educational institution of their choice on a whole-time basis, or to participate in this programme on a part-time basis. But for several reasons, this will only be a part-time programme.

It will be necessary to carry out careful surveys of young persons in a given locality to find out not only what their interests

are but also what the times are when they can conveniently receive instruction. The success of the programme will obviously depend as much upon the conformity between the hours of instruction and the leisure time of the youth as upon the 'fit' between its content and their needs and interests.

Part-time classroom instruction would thus be the most important technique. But it should not be the sole technique. It will have to be supplemented, wherever necessary, by correspondence education, education through mass media like the radio and the film, and full-time intensive instruction of comparatively short duration provided in specially arranged residential camps. All these different techniques will have to be mixed appropriately to meet the needs of each group from time to time.

#### AGENCIES

What are the agencies through which this programme can be developed? It will be a fatal mistake to try to create a new agency for the programme. Such a proposal will be extremely costly and will also take too much time. Our policy should, therefore, be to create only a new organisation for the programme, and to utilise for its purposes all the resources both human and material of all existing institutions as well as the educational resources available in the community itself, which often go untapped. This is the only economic and practical method of attacking the problem in a massive way and without much loss of time.

The focal agency that should be harnessed for this programme is the huge infrastructure we have created for the education of children and the young, namely, our primary and middle schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and vocational institutions of all categories. We have now about 550,000 primary schools, about 120,000 middle schools, about 50,000 secondary schools, about 4,000 colleges, nearly 100 universities or university-level institutions, and some thousands of vocational institutions for both agriculture and industry. They have among them about 2.5 million teachers, thousands of buildings, and equipment valued in tens of millions of rupees. These are vast resources that must be utilised for this programme on a part-time basis. There is also the special advantage for this programme that most of these

out-of-school youth will have been at some time students in these schools. It is therefore suggested that these institutions should be the centres round which the new programme should be built, and that their teachers, equipment, and buildings should be fully utilised. This will not create any conflict between their normal programmes and this new part-time programme. If steps are taken to pay additional remuneration to teachers for the extra work they will have to do, it will be possible to mount this programme at a minimal cost and in the shortest time.

Important as the role of these educational institutions is in this programme, it is necessary to realise that the cooperation of several other agencies has also to be secured in its proper development. The core of the new programme has to be vocational, and for this the present educational system is not adequately equipped. In addition to the resources that all existing institutions or vocational education can bring to bear, it is necessary to enlist additional support through all other available organisations; for example, the agricultural universities, the Gram Sewak training centres, and the demonstration or seed farms of the agricultural departments can provide valuable resources for education in agriculture. The Industrial Training Institutes can provide a very good base for education in industry. The personnel of the Health Department, institutions of medical education, and the hospitals and dispensaries can add their resources for the development of family life education, including family planning. Several other departments of government can also make their own significant contributions, and it will be necessary to rope all of them into the programme.

Not only this. The large educational resources that the community has, and that generally go untapped, will have to be utilised. For instance, retired teachers can be of great help. The private medical practitioners may have to be involved in courses in family planning. Private industry should also be required to assist and participate. The services of individual craftsmen and other skilled workers who may be managing their own business, could also be requisitioned on a part-time basis. Sportsmen and artists living in the community can be harnessed to provide for recreational and cultural needs. And so on.

It is claimed that in any given area where the programme is to be developed, we will find not only the educational needs of the young but also several institutions and personnel who have skills and services to meet these needs. What is therefore needed is a survey of the educational needs and interests of the young, on the one hand, and of the institutional and human resources available in the community to meet them, on the other. The contribution of the organiser is to bring these two together in a meaningful manner. This, therefore, is essentially a problem not of a lack of resources but of a lack of the necessary vision and organisation. It is these that we have now to emphasize.

In all countries where such programmes have been developed, it is found that the young themselves make very good teachers for the young. It should, therefore, be our policy, right from the start, to develop leaders from among the out-of-school youth who will take increasingly upon themselves the growing responsibilities of this educational programme. This is also the reason why such a programme will provide special opportunities for compulsory national service. If government desires to make national service compulsory for university graduates, the development of this programme can provide the necessary field experience; for on the basis of this alone, a meaningful programme of national service for university students can be developed.

### ORGANISATION

What type of an organisation will be needed for the development of this programme and how shall the programme evolve? These are the two important questions that we will have to answer.

It may be desirable to visualise, in the first instance, the organisation required at the grass root level. We may, therefore, take the district as a unit. What is visualised here is that there will be a special officer in charge of this programme for the district as a whole, with the necessary subordinate staff to assist him in the discharge of his responsibilities. This officer, whose responsibilities will be largely organisational, may belong to the Education Department. But he will have to coordinate the resources of all Government departments if the programme is to succeed.

Once this officer is in position, the next thing to decide upon is the centres where the programme will start. As has been stated above, the centre will have to be some educational institution either a college or a secondary school or even a primary or middle school. Ultimately, all these institutions will have to be involved. But to begin with, the district officer will have to take a quick survey and select a few institutions where the necessary leadership and interest is available. He might begin with about fifty to a hundred centres in a district. These may be spread in all parts of the district or may be selectively located in a few community development blocks.

Once the centres are selected, the next step would be to survey the local needs as well as the available resources. The survey of needs will include contacting every young person in the age-group 15-25 who is out of school and asking him whether he would like to continue his education and, if so, what his principal interests and convenient times are. The survey of available resources will include collecting full information about all the institutional and human resources available in the community that could be utilised, on a part-time basis, for a programme of this type. If the survey is properly carried out (and the personnel carrying out the survey could be quickly trained in a workshop of about 10 to 15 days), a picture of a programme for the locality will emerge. It will be the young persons who are interested in further education, the type of training they need, and also the local agencies that can be mobilised. It will then also be possible to work out the financial estimates. These will obviously vary from place to place and also depend considerably upon the type of programme to be evolved.

In planning the programmes, the key factors are elasticity and an earnest effort to get a 'fit' between the needs of the individual and the facilities provided for him. While in theory an attempt has to be made to meet, as individually as possible, the needs of the different categories of youth, in practice it will generally mean that certain 'group needs' will be identified and met in groups.

The overall attempt should be to provide, for each out-of-school youth, a programme of part-time education for one to two hours a day, five days a week, which will be equivalent to full-time education for three months in a year. In addition, he should

be required to spend at least two weeks in full-time residential instruction. To begin with, the idea should be to get every out-of-school youth under the programme for a period of one year at least. Many of the young persons who are thus exposed will want to continue their studies further on an optional basis, and they should be given every encouragement to do so. Ultimately the programme should be able to provide about three years of such part-time education to all in this age-group.

Even in one year of part-time education, it is possible to include some upgrading of vocational skills, courses for functional literacy where necessary, some general education in citizenship, family life education, and some provision for recreational and cultural activities. But something very worthwhile could be achieved if a young person were to continue under the programme for about three years.

The programmes for boys are comparatively easier to organise and the resources available for them, especially in terms of personnel, are larger. In the beginning, therefore, the programme will be largely meant for boys. But the importance of education for the girls should not be underrated and special efforts should be made, right from the start, to meet their needs.

While a beginning can thus be made with about 50 centres in a district, it should be possible to expand to about 200 centres in three or four years, and the entire district can be intensively covered during the next decade.

We should begin with at least one district in every State and in at least one block in every Union Territory. The expansion will follow certain obvious lines. Every year, new districts or community development blocks may be added. In a district that has already been selected, new centres can be added; and in centres that are already established, attempts can be made to increase enrolments and to deepen and diversify the programmes. The target should be that at the end of the Fourth Plan we should bring under this programme about 10 per cent—nine million—of the total population of out-of-school youth. If funds do not permit, the target may be reduced by 50 per cent. At the end of the Fifth Plan, the attempt should be to cover about 50 to 60 per cent of the age-group at least for a minimum period of one year. This will of course be continued, on a voluntary basis, for as long a period as practicable.

It may be an advantage to have an advisory committee at the district level consisting of the representatives of all agencies and departments that will cooperate therein.

If this basic structure at the district level is properly developed, coordination at other levels will not present any serious problem. At the State level, there will have to be a special officer of the status of a Joint or Additional Director of Education to look after the programme. There may be an advantage in having a State-level coordination committee to assist him. At the Central level, we might have a similar coordinating committee of the ministries concerned, with a special officer in charge of the programme located in the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

**Elementary Education**

---

## Elementary Teachers in India— A Historical Survey (1800-1961)\*

---

### TEACHERS IN THE INDIGENOUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, elementary education was provided almost exclusively in the indigenous schools. The instruction given in these institutions, which catered mainly to the requirements of the petty zamindars, *banias* or well-to-do farmers, was of a practical type and mostly limited to the three R's. The teachers were, therefore, men of humble attainments, and in most cases, had received no education other than in the elementary schools themselves. Many of them conducted the schools as a hereditary profession. They had no special training in methods except what they had learnt through apprenticeship to some teacher in their early years or what they had observed while reading in the elementary schools. Their remuneration was generally low and varied from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per month, including all collections and occasional presents in cash and kind. More often than not, they had some other means of livelihood, either through land, or through some other profession pursued on a part-time basis. In view of the low prices which then prevailed, their total remuneration, meagre as it appears from the standards of today, was still comparatively high to enable them to belong to the respectable middle class. Their social status was even higher, partly because of their caste—a large number of these teachers belonged to the higher castes or were priests and partly because even the humble education which they provided was greatly esteemed in the society. They were brought up in a

\* National Council of Educational Research and Training. 1964.



tradition of earnest devotion to duty and took such keen interest in the education of every child entrusted to their care that they won the respect and affection of the entire local community, most of whose leading members would have been their students at some stage or other. This also enabled them to assume a natural role of leadership, not only in the cultural field, but in the entire life of the community.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN THE MODERN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION (PRIOR TO 1855)

The modern cadres of elementary teachers have been evolved, during the last 160 years, from this community of indigenous elementary school teachers and it is this evolution which will be briefly described in this chapter.

The first efforts to develop a modern system of elementary education in India were made by the British administrators in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This was attempted in two ways: the establishment of government schools and the development of indigenous schools through grants-in-aid. The first of these methods was adopted in Bombay where the object of elementary education was defined ambitiously to include, not only the teaching of the three R's but also the spread, through modern Indian languages, of Western science and literature. Since this objective could not be achieved through the indigenous schools, it was decided to establish Government schools to realise it. A group of competent young men was, therefore, selected, trained over a period of three years, and appointed as teachers in Government elementary schools. Their salaries were fixed at a fairly high level. These varied from Rs. 10 to 60 per month, and compared very favourably with the emoluments of the teachers in the indigenous schools.

A similar attempt to spread elementary education through government schools was tried in the North Western Provinces and the Punjab, although the salaries of teachers were not so high and the objectives of the curriculum as well as the duration of training, were not so ambitious. In 1855, the Government of Bengal introduced the 'circle system' under which indigenous schools were proposed to be improved by employing and paying certain *pandits*, each of whom was attached to a circle of three or four village schools. The *pandits* trained and guided the village school

teachers who did not receive any definite salary but earned grants on the basis of the results of their pupils. The rates of grants-in-aid, however, were so low that the total remuneration earned by a teacher was never more than Rs. 3 to 5 per month. It will thus be seen that, even at this early period, two different cadres of elementary school teachers began to grow up. The first was the cadre of elementary teachers who were regular Government servants, who had received fairly good general education and some training, and who were given what may be regarded as adequate remuneration from the point of view of this period; and the second was the cadre of elementary school teachers in aided schools who received small grants from Government based on results, in addition to whatever the local community provided for them.

Elementary education made but little progress prior to 1855. The statistics of 1855 showed only 1,202 department primary schools with an enrolment of 40,401. The aided and inspected schools numbered only 36 with an enrolment of 2,342. The bulk of elementary education at this period was, therefore, provided by the extra-departmental schools which numbered 1,572 with an enrolment of 54,540 and indigenous schools which numbered 47,866 with an enrolment of 788,701. The general education, training or remuneration of teachers had been improved, as stated above, only in the departmental schools; and in all the other institutions, the general conditions of elementary teachers continued to be the same as under the indigenous system.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS (1855-81)

Between 1855 and 1881, there was a great deal of expansion of elementary education. This was due to two reasons: The first was the levy of the local fund cesses recommended by the Despatch of 1859; and the second was the permission given to municipalities to establish and maintain elementary schools within their areas. In this period, therefore, two new categories of elementary schools came into existence: (1) the local fund schools financed mainly or exclusively by the proceeds of the local fund cess levied on land revenue in the rural areas; and (2) the municipal schools established by the municipalities from their general revenues. (No special cess for education was levied in urban areas.) No detailed statistics are available. But it may be said

that, out of the total of 86320 elementary schools (with an enrolment of 22,10,171) which existed in 1881-82, the Government schools were the fewest and the indigenous schools the largest in number. The local authority schools (district board or rural or municipal or urban) occupied an intermediate position. The status and remuneration of the elementary teachers differed from one category to another. This division of the elementary teachers into three distinct categories with corresponding differences in status and remuneration continues to this day. Improvement in the general education and professional training of elementary teachers. Owing to the spread of primary and middle school education, it was now possible to obtain as teachers the services of persons who had received general education at a level higher than that where they would be required to teach. Besides, the need of professional training had come to be recognised. In 1885, there were only seven training institutions for elementary teachers in India with a total enrolment of 197 students. In 1881-82, there were 106 training schools (15 for women) with a total enrolment of 3886 (3371 men and 515 women) at an expenditure of about Rs. 400,000. The overall percentage of trained teachers was 18.4; but that amongst the teachers in department schools was as high as 45.4 and in aided schools, it was only 8.6. These were not high standards by any means; but they showed considerable progress since 1855.

The remuneration of teachers also showed some improvement during this period. For the country as a whole, the average annual salary of a teacher was about Rs. 89. But the position varied considerably from area to area and from one category of school to another. In Madras, the average salary of a teacher was Rs. 7 per month in schools aided on the basis of payment-by-results; in local board and municipal schools, they drew a fixed average monthly salary of Rs. 5 and a contingent income of about Rs. 2.50 per month; and in schools assisted on the basis of salary grants, the monthly remuneration varied from Rs. 5 for an assistant to Rs. 10-12 for a headmaster. In Bombay, the salary varied from Rs. 4 per month to Rs. 60 per month; but about 59 per cent of the teachers received salaries not exceeding Rs. 10 per month. Teachers whose salaries were more than Rs. 10 were also eligible for pensions. In Bengal, the average annual pay of a teacher of an upper primary school was estimated at Rs. 100

of which Rs. 48 were paid by Government and Rs. 52 from local sources. In the lower primary schools, the salaries were much lower. Most of these institutions were aided and the amount of grant-in-aid was small - about 5,000 schools getting a grant-in-aid of Rs. 30-40 per annum, about 34,000 schools getting a grant of Rs. 5.5 per annum, and about 6,000 schools getting a grant-in-aid of Rs. 1.7 per annum. In these institutions, therefore, the remuneration of the teacher was mostly made of local contributions in cash and kind as in the indigenous schools. In the North Western Provinces, the monthly salaries of the Halkabandi teachers varied from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12; but they had no claim for pensions or gratuities. In Punjab, the minimum pay of a school teacher was fixed at Rs. 10 per month for headmasters; but assistants received lower salaries, sometimes as low as Rs. 6 per month. The position in other areas was similar and fell somewhere between the aided primary school teachers in Bengal on the one hand and the Government or local fund school teachers in Punjab and Bombay on the other.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS (1881-1901)

The Indian Education Commission recommended that the administration of elementary education should be transferred to local bodies, that larger financial allocations should be made to elementary education and that definite steps should be taken to expand elementary education as quickly as possible. It also emphasized the need to improve the general education and training of elementary teachers. But it made no recommendations regarding improvement in the remuneration and social status of teachers and contented itself by saying that 'All parties are agreed as to the advantage of raising the status of the village school masters and the measures appropriate to that end may be left to the local authorities. The provision of liberal aid to indigenous schoolmasters is obviously the most simple and effective means of raising their position.'

In 1901-02, the total number of elementary schools rose to 102,177 with enrolment of 3,564,245. Of these, only 569 were conducted by government because the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission to transfer elementary education to local bodies had been universally accepted; 17,545 were conducted by local bodies; 3,567 were maintained by the erstwhile

princely states; 61,638 were aided; and 18,858 were unaided. It will thus be seen that the bulk of the schools was conducted either by the local bodies or by private agencies. As was pointed out above, the remuneration of teachers was much lower in these institutions than in Government schools and in consequence, their teachers generally had a poorer standard of general education and professional training. The extreme reduction in the number of Government schools and the consequent increase in the number of local authority or private elementary schools, therefore, did have an adverse effect on the education, training and remuneration of elementary teachers.

The total number of primary teachers\* in 1901-02 was estimated at 111,259. During the preceding two decades, the number of training institutions for elementary teachers had increased to 155 with an enrolment of 5,405 and an annual recurring expenditure of Rs. 0.471 million. But on account of expansion, the percentage of trained teachers in 1901-02 was only 18.1, the same as in 1881-82 and only 20,474 teachers had received training. Of the others, as many as 56,241 were described as having other qualifications which, in practice, meant either the passing of a higher examination in general education (such as middle school or lower secondary) or the completion of a satisfactory service for a specific period which varied from two to seven years in the different provinces; and 34,544 teachers were described as being 'unqualified' which, in practice, meant that they had received no education beyond the elementary school itself. The overall position of the general education and professional training of elementary school teachers in 1901-02 was thus only slightly better than that in 1881-82.

The remuneration of teachers also did not show any improvement. In 1901-02, the average annual salary of a primary teacher was only Rs. 91 as against Rs. 89 in 1881-82. The highest salaries were paid in government schools where they varied from Rs. 5 to 20 in Madras, to Rs. 8 to 55 in Punjab and Rs. 7 to 60 in Bombay. Next in order came the local board schools where salaries varied from Rs. 2 to 17 in United Provinces, to Rs. 5 to 15 in Madras, Rs. 4 to 40 in Punjab and Rs. 7 to 60 in Bombay. The lowest remuneration was given in the aided schools and it

\*The data regarding middle school teachers for 1901-02 are not available.

varied from Rs. 3 to 8 in Bengal, to Rs. 3 to 15 in Madras, Rs. 3 to 28 in Punjab, Rs. 2 to 20 in United Provinces and Rs. 3 to 60 in Bombay. It is true that teachers in Punjab or Bombay could rise to a monthly salary of Rs. 55 or Rs. 60; but the number of such posts was very small and did not materially affect the average remuneration of teachers. In fact, it was the low remuneration of the teachers of this period, which had hardly shown any improvement during the previous two decades and the purchasing power of which had become much less owing to the rise in prices of commodities, that was mainly responsible for the failure to attract adequately educated persons to the profession and for the large proportion of untrained or unqualified teachers.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS (1901-21)

With the turn of the century, greater attention came to be paid to improving the general education, professional training and remuneration of elementary school teachers. This was due to several reasons. In England, a significant movement for the qualitative improvement of education had been initiated by the Education Act of 1902 and it led to a similar shift in emphasis in Indian Education also. The objectives of elementary education were now redefined more ambitiously with the result that the need to have better educated, better trained (and consequently better paid) teachers began to be felt more keenly. The Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 1913, gave high priority to teacher improvement. It directed that "teachers should be drawn from the class of the boys whom they will teach; they should have passed the middle vernacular examination or have been through a corresponding course, and should have undergone a year's training. Where they have passed through only the upper primary course and have not already had sufficient experience in a school, a two years' course of training is generally desirable. This training may in the first instance be given in small local institutions, but preferably, as funds permit, in larger and more efficient central normal schools. In both kinds of institutions adequate practising schools are a necessary adjunct and the size of the practising school will generally determine the size of the normal school. As teachers left to themselves in villages are liable to deteriorate, there are great advantages in periodical repetition and improvement courses for primary school teachers during the

school vacations. Trained teachers should receive not less than Rs. 12 per month (special rates being given in certain areas); they should be placed in a graded service; and they should either be eligible for a pension or admitted to a provident fund." During the First World War there was an inordinate rise in the prices of commodities, and even on economic grounds, it became essential to improve the remuneration of teachers. It was also a fortunate coincidence that this happened to be a boom period in Indian finance so that the large additional funds required for implementing these programmes could be readily found. The net result of all these circumstances was to bring about a considerable improvement in the academic and economic status of elementary school teachers between 1920 and 1921.

By 1921, elementary education expanded very considerably. In 1921-22 the number of elementary schools was 166,809 with a total enrolment of 6432804 as against 102,177 elementary schools with 3,564,245 pupils in 1901-02. This implies an increase of about 63 per cent in schools and of about 87 per cent in enrolment. But the increase in the direct expenditure on elementary education was much greater - it rose from Rs. 11.8 millions in 1901-02 to Rs. 67.5 millions in 1921-22. The main reason for this increase was, not an increase in the number of schools or enrolment, but a rise in the average annual salary of the elementary school teacher. This increased, for primary teachers, from Rs. 91 in 1901-02 to Rs. 174 in 1921-22. The statistics of the average salary of middle school teachers in 1901-02 are not available but in 1921-22 this was Rs. 393. As in the past, the pay scales of teachers varied largely from one province to another and also from one type of school to another. But by and large, it may be said that attempts were made, during this period, to raise the minimum salaries, to provide incremental scales of pay, wherever possible, and to improve old-age provision. In the Punjab, for instance, the average monthly salary of a qualified primary school teacher rose to Rs. 26. In the Central Provinces, the minimum salaries of primary school teachers in rural areas were Rs. 15 for untrained and Rs. 20 for trained, the teachers in the costlier districts getting an additional allowance of Rs. 3 per month. In the urban areas, these salaries were fixed at Rs. 17 and Rs. 22 respectively. In Bombay, the salaries were higher still and varied from Rs. 25 to Rs. 60. The remuneration of teachers was the best in these Provinces because

the scales of pay were higher and the number of government and local authority schools was also comparatively larger. Madras and United Provinces occupied an intermediate position. In Madras, the local authority schools gave a minimum pay of Rs. 10 for untrained and Rs. 12 for trained teachers. In the aided schools, the annual grants-in-aid were increased to Rs. 48 per year for the untrained teacher with the lowest qualifications to Rs. 180 per year for the most qualified teacher. In United Provinces untrained assistants received a minimum salary of Rs. 12 per month while trained assistants were paid from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 and headmasters from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30. At the other extreme came Bihar and West Bengal where most of the schools were aided. In Bihar, the average fee collection in an aided school was Rs. 3 per month and in addition, the teacher received a small grant-in-aid which, in a large majority of schools, was not more than Rs. 3 per month and it rose to a maximum of Rs. 9 only in a few schools. In Bengal, the situation was no better and even the un-ambitious proposals formulated for improving the remuneration of teachers, could not be implemented owing to a lack of financial resources. In fact, if it were not for the effect of the low salaries prevailing in the numerous aided schools in Bihar, Bengal (or in other states like Madras), the average annual salary of teachers in the country as a whole would have been much higher.

The contemporary reactions to this first national attempt at improving the remuneration of elementary school teachers beyond that in the indigenous schools are interesting. In spite of fact that the overall increase in the average annual salary of an elementary teacher was small, and in spite of the clear realisation that a large part of it was under-written by the increase in the prices of commodities which had taken place during the First World War, there was a general feeling of satisfaction for what had been actually achieved. The government pointed out, and quite rightly too, that a very large proportion of the additional resources which became available for elementary education during this period was devoted mainly to improving the remuneration of teachers, and to providing them with a better old-age provision.\* Even in the United Provinces, where the

---

\*By 1921-22, teachers in government and local body schools generally got pensions and it was only the teachers of aided schools for whom no old-age provision of any type whatsoever was made.

improvement in remuneration was not as outstanding as in Bombay or Punjab, the Director of Education reported that the "pay now offered to the primary teachers raises them beyond the fear of want and there is apparently no difficulty in getting recruits for the profession." On the other hand, in areas like Punjab or Bombay, where the improvement in remuneration had been a little greater, there were some who warned the Department that it would be unwise to utilise all or most of the funds available in raising the salaries of teachers and that a mere improvement in remuneration of teachers would not necessarily be accompanied by improvement in standards. But when all is said and done, the administrators of elementary education during this period must be complimented for improving the remuneration of teachers and for giving them back some of the 'respectability' in society which they had lost rapidly towards the end of the nineteenth century on account of economic handicaps.

This has been beautifully expressed by the Director of Education of the United Provinces, who observes:

The teacher is a product of the past. For years, he has been despised, first because as a teacher he took pay at all for his service and again because having taken it, he took so little. The first thing he has to achieve under the new conditions is respectability. Wherever there is a teacher who is respected, there is a flourishing school.\*

This gain in the social status of the teacher, due to his economic improvement, was offset to some extent, on account of three developments. In the first place, the teacher was no longer exclusively a member of the higher castes or a priest. In fact, Government had adopted the right policy of recruiting teachers from all classes of society, including the scheduled castes. The status respect which the indigenous school teachers enjoyed could not, therefore, be automatically obtained by the new cadres of elementary school teachers. Secondly, many of these teachers came from classes which were entirely alien to education. They did not also have that tradition of learning and teaching which the teachers of the earlier generations had inherited through centuries. In missionary zeal, idealism and devotion to duty,

---

\* Report of the Director of Education in the United Provinces, 1921-22.

therefore, this new generation of elementary school teachers was not quite equal to that of the old masters and this naturally led to a slight lowering in their social status as well. A third factor that affected the situation was the changing character of rural and urban economy itself under the impact of modern conditions. In the new setup, a new social leadership based on money, contact or influence with Government, etc. was being built up and in this setup the elementary school teacher had hardly any place. By 1921-22, therefore, it may be said that the elementary school teacher in the towns had already lost his role in social leadership and that, in the villages, he was well on the way to lose it rapidly.

On the academic side, however, the gains were undisputed. Owing partly to the spread of middle school and secondary school education, and partly to the improvement in remuneration, a better type of person now began to be attracted to the profession of elementary teachers. Their general education improved considerably and, barring a few exceptional cases, no person who had not completed the middle school would ordinarily be recruited as an elementary school teacher. Even matriculates began to join the cadre, although their number was too small to make any impact. In the field of professional training also, there was a corresponding improvement. In 1921-22, the number of training institutions in India was 1072 with an enrolment of 26931 and a total recurring expenditure of Rs. 47 million in 1901. Owing to this expansion, the percentage of trained teachers also increased from 18.4 in 1901 to 39 in 1921-22, United Provinces and Punjab having the highest percentages of trained teachers (57) and Bengal, the lowest (25). What was more important, the quality of instruction provided in the training institutions was improved considerably. They were now provided with better staff, better buildings and equipment and were given a more impressive programme of instruction in pedagogics and subject content. In consequence of this improvement in the general education and professional training of teachers, it was possible for government to adopt richer curricula at the elementary stage and generally to raise standards.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS (1921-47)

This brilliant record of progress between 1901 and 1921 was maintained and in some respects, even carried forward during the

next 25 years. By 1946-47, the total number of elementary schools in the country increased to 185,504 with an enrolment of 14.81 millions and a total recurring expenditure of Rs. 232.9 millions. The developments in respect of elementary teachers had to keep pace with this unprecedented expansion.

The first concrete development of this period was the emphasis on the enlargement of the objectives and scope of elementary education. The earlier ideas of restricting instruction in the elementary schools to the three R's and some general knowledge could no longer be adopted. On the other hand, it was now felt that a student passing through the elementary school must become a responsible and useful citizen. It was in this attempt to retain the scope and content of elementary education that Mahatma Gandhi formulated his programme of basic education which was immediately adopted, on an experimental basis, and after trial for a few years, for universalisation in all parts of the country. This important reform created the need for a much better type of elementary teacher than was ever had in the past. It was now felt that the minimum general education of an elementary teacher should be matriculation and that he should have received two years professional training thereafter. In the middle schools, a certain proportion of teachers had to be graduates. Even at the primary stage, it would be desirable to have trained graduates as headmasters, at least in the bigger primary schools.

This larger expectation of the elementary teachers naturally led to an effort to improve his remuneration. Unfortunately, the years between 1925-37 were, those of the post-war retrenchment and the world economic depression. The average annual salaries of teachers in 1936-37 were, therefore, even lower than those in 1926-27. But partly from the urge to improve the remuneration of teachers on educational grounds and partly to meet the rise in the prices of commodities during the second world war, the remuneration of elementary teachers was stepped up considerably between 1937 and 1947. Thus the average annual salary of a primary teacher in 1946-47 was Rs. 387 as against Rs. 174 in 1921-22. At the middle school stage also, the average annual salary of a teacher in 1946-47 was Rs. 561 as against Rs. 393 in 1921-22. Even if a part of this increase is under-written on account of the increase in the cost of living, the overall improvement is obvious and significant.

This increase in remuneration, combined with a very large-scale expansion in secondary education, made it possible for state governments to improve the educational qualifications of elementary teachers. Matriculates, who were just beginning to join the profession in 1921, were now found in considerable numbers in primary schools and to a still greater extent in the middle schools. Graduates also began to join primary schools—although their number still formed a microscopic minority—and many of them joined the middle schools. The duration of training was lengthened, in many instances, to two years. The number of training institutions fell to 649 in 1946-47, as against 1,072 in 1921-22. But this was really a gain because the smaller and inefficient institutions were eliminated and replaced by bigger and better ones. The total enrolment in training institutions increased from 26,931 in 1921-22 to 38,773 in 1946-47 and their total expenditure from Rs. 5096 millions in 1921-22 to Rs. 8,005 millions in 1946-47. The percentage of trained teachers also rose from 39 in 1921-22 to 64 in 1946-47. As in 1921-22, there were large variations from province to province, the highest percentage of trained teachers being found in Madras and Punjab and the lowest in Bengal and Bihar.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS (1947-61)

The post-independence period has witnessed the greatest expansion in elementary education. In 1960-61, the total number of elementary schools in the country rose to 381,359 with an enrolment of 37,259,620 and a total recurring expenditure of Rs. 1,166 millions. In spite of this unprecedented expansion, it was possible to maintain progress in improving the economic, academic and social status of elementary school teachers.

The remuneration of elementary teachers showed considerable improvement during this period. The average annual salary of a primary teacher increased from Rs. 387 in 1946-47 to about Rs. 900 in 1960-61 and that of a middle school teacher from Rs. 561 in 1946-47 to about Rs. 1,100 in 1960-61. Since there has been an increase in the prices of commodities during this period, a part of this increase in remuneration would have to be under-written. But even after making due allowance for this fact, it cannot be gainsaid that there has been a substantial improvement in the remuneration of elementary school teachers in the post-independence period.

It may be admitted that this increase in the remuneration of elementary teachers has not been uniform in all the states and areas. In metropolitan cities like Delhi or Bombay, the remuneration offered to elementary teachers is probably the best in the country. Among the states, the remuneration is high in states like Punjab, Gujarat or Maharashtra and lowest in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The following table shows the average emoluments of primary and middle school teachers in the different states of India in 1960-61.

Table 1: Remuneration of Elementary School Teachers (1960-61)

State	Average annual salary	
	Primary teacher Rs.	Middle school teacher Rs.
Andhra Pradesh	938.2	1007.6
Assam	747.7	869.0
Bihar	700.6	935.5
Gujarat	1242.3	1050.0
Jammu & Kashmir	680.1	1133.7
Kerala	1091.1	1050.0
Madhya Pradesh	888.8	946.2
Madras	875.9	973.3
Maharashtra	1199.7	1262.2
Mysore	963.9	981.5
Orissa	504.0	936.0
Punjab	1146.8	1378.6
Rajasthan	923.9	1121.8
Uttar Pradesh	624.4	863.2
West Bengal	782.7	1118.1

Steps have also been taken to improve the old-age provision for elementary school teachers. In so far as Government schools are concerned, the problem hardly arises, and all elementary teachers in Government schools get pension-cum-gratuity like other Government servants. In the local authority schools, the arrangements made vary from one state to another and the old-age provision actually made falls in three categories. In the first category come teachers who are eligible for pension or pension-cum-gratuity. This includes states like Rajasthan where primary teachers working under the Panchayat Samitis have been given the same privileges in respect of old-age provision as government

servants. Gujarat which has provided pension to all teachers working under local body schools, although subject to a slight differentiation between them and the government servants, and Maharashtra which has sanctioned a scheme of *ad hoc* pensions for elementary teachers in local authority schools, also fall in the same category. In the second category, we may include states such as Madras or Andhra Pradesh in which elementary school teachers under local bodies are given the triple benefit scheme. Under this scheme, the elementary teachers (1) get a pension at one-fourth of the average retiring salary, (2) get a provident fund at three per cent of the salary, and (3) are also required to insure their lives for specified amounts. In the third category come states like Uttar Pradesh, where the only old-age provision made for elementary teachers in local authority schools is the institution of a contributory provident fund. It may, therefore, be said that by and large, fairly adequate old-age provision has now been made for all teachers in the public elementary schools conducted by government and local authorities. The problem, however, has still to be solved in respect of private elementary schools. For them, some states like Madras have provided a triple-benefit scheme. But in most areas, there is no old-age provision for the vast majority of teachers in private elementary schools.

The improvement in the general education of elementary teachers has kept pace with, or even gone beyond, the improvement in their remuneration. The Government of India recommended that matriculation or its equivalent should be prescribed as the minimum educational qualification for an elementary teacher. This recommendation has now been accepted in most parts of the country. In states like West Bengal, Punjab or Kerala, no non-matriculate teacher is recruited. In states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, the man teacher is almost always a matriculate; but owing to the non-availability of women teachers, middle passed women have often to be recruited as teachers especially in rural areas. In states like Maharashtra, the minimum qualification still continues to be a pass in the examination at the end of the middle school; but preference is given to matriculates who are readily available in adequate numbers. Taking India as a whole, therefore, it may be said that about 75 per cent of all new recruitment to the cadre of elementary teachers is of matriculates only. In fact, the recruitment of non-

matriculates is now confined very largely to two groups: (1) women and (2) scheduled tribes. What is even more important, however, is that graduates are now joining elementary schools in ever increasing numbers. At present, about 20,000 graduates are working in elementary schools and this number is increasing very rapidly. It may, therefore, be said that the average elementary school teacher of today is much better educated than his counterpart on the eve of the attainment of independence.

The progress in the field of professional training has also been very good, although it could not keep pace with the improvements in general education. In 1960-61, there were 1,122 training institutions for elementary teachers with a total enrolment of 121,696 which shows a very great advance since 1946-47. But owing to the large expansion achieved, the percentage of trained teachers did not show any material increase. Taking the country as a whole, the percentage of trained teachers in 1960-61 was practically the same as in 1946-47. Table 2 shows the percentage of trained elementary school teachers in the different states in 1960-61.

From the qualitative point of view, however, the training institutions for elementary teachers left a good deal to be desired. The Government of India had recommended that the duration of the training should be increased to two years. It had not been possible, even in 1960-61, to implement this reform in several states such as Assam, West Bengal, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, where the duration of teacher training is still one year. Moreover, it has not been possible to provide staff of high competence for these training institutions, nor is the provision of buildings and equipment made for them, adequate. These problems have just begun to attract attention and it would be some time before they can be satisfactorily solved.

The problem of the social status of teachers also received some attention during this period. It was realised that the elementary school teacher in general did not enjoy an adequate social status, either in urban or in rural areas. Some steps to improve the situation were, therefore, taken. Reference has already been made to the increase in their remuneration and to the improvement in their academic qualifications. Both these measures did help to some extent in raising their overall social status. The Ministry of Education instituted a scheme of national awards for teachers

under which several outstanding elementary school teachers are selected every year from all the states of India and given awards of Rs. 500 by the resident of the Union. The scheme has been very helpful in inviting public attention to the nation-building work which these teachers are doing.

Table 2: Trained Elementary Teachers (1960-61)

State	Percentage of trained	
	Primary teacher	Middle school teacher
Andhra Pradesh	82.9	77.0
Assam	39.3	25.9
Bihar	71.2	63.6
Gujarat	35.6	54.3
Jammu & Kashmir	54.1	56.7
Kerala	90.8	77.9
Madhya Pradesh	51.0	50.8
Madras	95.9	96.5
Maharashtra	49.8	72.8
Mysore	43.4	61.3
Orissa	38.5	33.9
Punjab	92.1	90.6
Rajasthan	50.8	50.3
Uttar Pradesh	74.8	77.8
West Bengal	38.1	14.8
Total	60.6	60.3

*General Conclusions :* The foregoing account of the evolution of the present cadres of elementary teachers in India from the indigenous elementary schools which covered the country at the opening of the nineteenth century throws interesting light on a number of major problems involved.

- 1) During the last 160 years, the remuneration of school teachers has been gradually rising. The average annual salary of a primary teacher was about Rs. 60 in the indigenous school at the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Towards the close of the century in 1901-02, it rose to Rs. 91. During the present century, the rise has been much steeper, especially at the time of the two world wars and in the post-independence period. The average annual salary of a primary teacher, which was only Rs. 91 in 1901-02 rose to Rs. 174 in 1921-22, Rs. 387 in 1946-47 and about



Rs. 900 in 1960-61. The average annual salary of a middle school teacher has also risen similarly from Rs. 393 in 1921-22 to Rs. 561 in 1946-47 and to Rs. 1,100 in 1960-61. A substantial part of this increase has to be written off on account of the rise in the cost of living. But even when allowance is made for this factor, the average remuneration of an elementary school teacher today is much better than what it was a few years ago. It will, however, have to be admitted that the primary teacher in India still continues to be one of the poorly paid public servants and that his wage compares unfavourably with that of other public servants with similar qualifications.

- 2) The general education of elementary school teachers has improved considerably, due partly to the better remuneration given and partly to the expansion of general education at all levels. In 1800, the average elementary school teacher knew little beyond what he was required to teach. Today, the matriculates form a very large proportion of the cadre of elementary teachers and new recruitment is being largely confined to those who have completed the secondary school. Quite a few graduates have joined the profession and their number is continually increasing.
- 3) The training programme for elementary school teachers has also made considerable progress. In 1800, there was not one teacher training institution in the country and even the concept of teacher education was not accepted. By 1960-61, professional training of a fair standard came to be provided for elementary school teachers and about 64 per cent of them were already trained.

In spite of these gains, there are a number of problems that still await solution. The remuneration of the elementary school teachers has to be improved still further and a better arrangement has to be made for their old-age provision. The recruitment on non-matriculates has to cease and the proportion of graduates has to be increased substantially. Training has to be expanded and its standards have to be raised. The general service conditions of elementary school teachers (inclusive of the methods of recruitment) have to be improved.

---

## Research in Elementary Education (1964)\*

---

Research is one of the most potent tools of reform in education. It enables the teachers and administrators to identify and understand educational problems, to devise appropriate solutions for them and to evaluate the effectiveness of different educational programmes. The development of research in elementary education is, therefore, badly needed if standards have to be improved.

Unfortunately, research in elementary education is still in its infancy. The reasons are not far to seek. Educational research itself is comparatively new in India. Attention to its significance was first drawn by the Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 1913, and more particularly by the Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19. Training colleges and university departments of education are the main institutions where such research can be expected to grow. But training colleges in India began to be established only towards the end of the nineteenth century and the university departments of education began later still in the third decade of the twentieth century. For a number of years, the functions of these institutions were mainly restricted to the preparation of teachers, and degrees in educational research were not instituted for a long time. By 1947, only five universities had instituted degrees in educational research and the total number of theses or dissertations approved by them was 153 only. Outside the universities and training colleges, a few individuals carried out some research work on their own; but the total volume of this research was extremely small, due partly to lack of

---

\* NCERT, New Delhi. 1964.

recognition of its significance. The development of educational research in India is, therefore, very recent, and the bulk of whatever educational research has been done so far is in the post-independence period.

Within education itself, the problems of elementary education have received very little attention because the university departments of education and the training colleges have mainly concerned themselves with the problems of secondary education. There is also a general feeling that the problems of elementary education are extremely simple and that they do not need the exertions of the best mind or high level research. University teachers who have specialised in elementary education and can guide research into its problems, are very few. Elementary teachers are not intellectually competent to undertake research in problems of elementary education, and outside their field, very few persons are interested in elementary education as such. For instance, an examination of all the researches done in connection with Indian University degrees till 1961 shows that, out of 83 these for the Ph.D. degree, only 6 related to elementary education. Out of 114 theses for the M.Ed. degree, only 18 related to elementary education; and out of 2,744 dissertations for the M. Ed. degree, only 238 related to elementary education.

This situation has to be altered very early. Research in the different problems of elementary education should be organised. Competent persons should be induced to specialise in problems of elementary education and special institutions should be established for developing educational research in general and that in elementary education in particular.

This would be a major programme of action during the Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans and the success of the programme of providing free and compulsory education of a high standard to all the children in the age-group 6-14 will largely depend upon the extent and quality of the research work that can be developed in elementary education during the next few years.

The main object of this chapter is to indicate the broad areas and problems of elementary education in which research is urgently needed. It is neither possible nor necessary to suggest detailed designs for the research projects proposed.

### THE PROBLEM OF SMALL VILLAGES OR HABITATIONS

The problem of providing school facilities in small villages or habitations where the total population is less than 200 is of great importance. It has been suggested that education can be taken to these areas only through three programmes: (i) a suitable grouping of the villages so as to make it economically possible to establish a common school for them; (ii) peripatetic teachers; and (iii) residential schools. The last of these is probably the most effective but the costliest of the solutions. Research will, therefore, have to be carried out to exploit the possibilities of the first two methods to the full. In particular, the experiment of peripatetic schools will have to be carefully developed and special methods of teaching which the organisation of these schools demand will have to be evolved.

### PROBLEMS OF ENROLMENT

One of the major objectives of a programme of elementary education is to enroll every child in the age-group 6-14 into schools. Research is, therefore, necessary to find out the main causes of non-enrolment and to discover the methods of overcoming them. The following research projects are essential in this context:

- a) *Studies on Non-attending Children:* It is necessary to find out who the non-attending children are, how they are utilising their time at present, the causes that prevent their enrolment in schools and the manner in which an educational programme could be organised for them, either on a whole-time or part-time basis. For this purpose, studies of non-attending children will have to be organised in selected areas in all parts of the country. Lists of non-attending children will have to be first prepared by moving from house to house. For each non-attending child, full data will have to be collected regarding his family, social and economic background, the nature of work which he does for the family at present and the time during which he is engaged in it from day to day. The causes of his non-enrolment will have to be examined in detail and, in consultation with the parent, a suitable programme will have to be drawn up regarding the manner in which the

child can be sent to school, without greatly upsetting the work he is doing for the family. What happens at present is that we offer only a full-time school (which functions for five to six hours a day) to all the children and ask them to take it or leave it. This mechanical and inelastic approach has to be replaced by a sympathetic understanding of the economic needs of the family and by a readiness to adjust the working hours of the school to the work which a child has to do for his family.

- b) *Absenteeism*: It is not enough to have a child enrolled in school. He must also be made to attend regularly and must be present in school for about 80 per cent of the days and sessions on which the school is open. In actual practice, it is found that the attendance of children in elementary schools is very irregular. Unfortunately, no attention has been paid to this problem so far and we have little or no data regarding the average number of days on which a child attends school in an academic year and the manner in which the regularity of his attendance varies from one season to another. In order to obtain a clear idea of the problem, it will be necessary to organise studies into absenteeism of pupils. Each state may select some areas for study of the problem on a random sample basis and watch the attendance of each child from day-to-day and the variations caused in it at different times of the year. The causes of such absenteeism, would also have to be studied separately for each individual case. These studies will provide enough data on the nature of absenteeism and its causes and will also suggest a programme of remedial action.

In particular, it will often be noticed in rural areas, that the absenteeism of children increases considerably when the agricultural season is in full swing and the help of the children is required by the family. Studies in absenteeism will enable the administration to ascertain the nature of the problems and to adjust school vacations to the demands of the agricultural seasons.

- c) *Wastage and Stagnation*: It is not enough to enrol a child into school and to see that he attends regularly from day to day. We have also to see that he progresses regularly from class

to class and is not withdrawn from school till he completes the compulsory age or the elementary course. In other words, we have to eliminate, or reduce to the minimum, the twin evils of wastage and stagnation.

Some research has been done, particularly in Maharashtra, regarding the extent of wastage and stagnation. These preliminary studies have clarified the nature of the problem and evolved some useful concepts for future research. But no such research has been done in other parts of India and, in particular, no work has been done regarding the causes of stagnation and wastage and the extent to which each cause operates.

For this purpose, we have to organise detailed studies of the problem in all parts of the country. A fairly large sample of students will have to be selected, on a random basis, in each selected area and the case of each pupil will have to be studied from the time he enters the elementary school to the time when he leaves it or completes the elementary course. This case study should show the family, social and economic background of the pupil, his attendance at school from year to year, his progress in studies and the results of his annual promotions, the total time spent in the school, the stage of leaving the school, and the causes for each failure as well as for premature withdrawal from school, if any. The value of these studies will depend mainly on their depth so that the causes of stagnation or wastage will have to be ascertained, after a very careful enquiry, with the school teachers, parents and the pupils themselves. If such studies are carried out with fairly large samples- 5 to 10 thousand pupils in each selected area a good deal of useful data would be available regarding the causes of wastage and stagnation and they will enable us to devise a suitable programme of reform. Needless to say, these studies will also have to be repeated from time to time so that the progress made in the reduction of these evils could be watched.

- d) *Part-time Education*: In the economic conditions that now prevail in the country, it will not be possible for large numbers of children, especially those belonging to the poorer families, to attend school on a whole-time basis as

they are required to do some work in or for the family. This inability becomes more accentuated as the children grow older and particularly in the age-group 9 or 10 to 14. It is, therefore, necessary to provide part-time education for such children and to adjust school hours in such a way that it will not interfere materially with the work that they do for their family. It is estimated that such part-time instruction may have to be provided, in the Fourth and the Fifth Plans, to about 25 to 30 per cent of the total number of children in the age-group 11-14.

Very little work on this problem has been done so far. Studies are needed for evolving curricula and special methods of teaching for part-time education. A good deal of experimental work is also necessary to find out the difficulties which these institutions will have to face and the manner in which they could be overcome. Orientation of teachers in the techniques suited to these institutions is another problem that needs investigation.

*Special Groups:* Problems (a) to (d) described above are particularly relevant in the case of girls and children from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In all such studies, therefore, it will be necessary to make special investigations regarding them.

*Handicapped Children:* The handicapped children form a small but significant group whose education is very little developed at present. A number of studies are required to make progress in this sector. We have little or no data on the size of the problem so that sample surveys for ascertaining the proportion of handicapped children will have to be conducted in different parts of the country. The existing schools for the handicapped children are very costly and methods of reducing this cost will have to be found. It is possible to educate certain groups of handicapped children in the ordinary schools by providing some special equipment and giving a special orientation to the teachers. This will obviate the necessity of increasing the number of special schools and reduce costs. Research and experiments will, however, have to be done to evolve proper techniques for educating the handicapped children in common schools and in orientating the teachers of the

ordinary schools to use these special methods and techniques.

### TEACHERS

A number of problems relating to teachers need detailed examination. Hardly any studies are available to show the social backgrounds from which the elementary teachers come and the common motivations which make a person choose teaching in an elementary school as a profession. Only a few small-scale studies are available to throw light on the economic conditions and academic life of the elementary teachers. It is, therefore, necessary to organise fairly large-scale random sample studies, in all parts of India, for understanding the social, economic and academic life of the elementary school teachers, their motivations, the common difficulties they have to face, and the manner in which they can be best assisted to lead a better social life and to improve their academic status.

The selection of teachers for admission to training institutions and their recruitment to the profession is another area in which research is needed and can be very fruitful. At present, the methods of selection or recruitment vary largely from state to state. But the most common element in the selection or recruitment procedures is to take into consideration the marks obtained in the last school leaving and / or teacher training examination, and also the performance at an interview before a committee which generally consists of officials and non-officials. In some cases, tests are also held and their results are taken into consideration in the final selection. But, by and large, the selection and recruitment procedures tend to be either too mechanical and related almost exclusively to the performance in the school leaving examination or too subjective and too largely influenced by an 'interview' whose character remains far too nebulous. No tests of successful teaching competence have been devised or are ever used. A number of studies are, therefore, needed in this sector. To begin with, even a comparative study of the existing selection or recruitment practices would be of great use and, by throwing light on the merits and demerits of each practice, would pave the way for their improvement in the future. Research is also needed for determining the qualities that make for successful teaching and for evolving objective tests for their measurement.

Research also needs to be developed in regard to the evaluation of the training programmes that we conduct at present and to ascertain their effectiveness. Most of our training programmes have been organised on an *ad hoc* basis, as a result of the labours of committees which have reported from time to time. But no attempt has been made to evaluate them scientifically. Our curricula for teacher-training tend to get overburdened. But do they really include all that is essential or is everything included in them really worthwhile? Do we utilise the right methods of teacher training or what is the effectiveness of the methods that we actually use? Are the objectives of teacher-training clearly defined and known to the teacher educators and teacher trainees? To what extent are these objectives being realised? How do the teacher trainees react to the programmes of teacher education devised at present? These and several other allied questions need answers and they can only be provided by carefully conducted research to assess the efficiency of the teachers before and after training and into the effectiveness of the different programmes of teacher education.

Research into the different aspects of the service conditions of teachers is also badly needed. In particular, careful and detailed studies are needed in regard to the practices followed at present in the postings and transfers of teachers with a view to evolving equitable and practical solutions to guide the authorities entrusted with these responsibilities. The intellectual isolation which prevents elementary teachers, especially those working in rural areas, from keeping in touch with the latest thought in the field has to be broken and a good deal of work is needed to develop suitable techniques for the purpose. Other problems that need investigation are the work load of elementary teachers, their involvement with local politics, the common pressures to which elementary teachers are subject and the relationship of teachers to the functionaries of other departments working in rural areas.

#### CURRICULA, TEACHING METHODS, TEXTBOOKS AND READING MATERIALS

There is almost an infinite scope for the development of research in devising curricula and teaching methods for elementary schools and in regard to the preparation of textbooks and other reading materials needed by elementary school children.

There are hardly any studies relating to the development of Indian children and our knowledge of the subject is at present derived mainly from studies conducted in Western countries. Although a good deal of this is applicable to India, there are significant differences as well due to differences in climate, race, food and social environment. A precise knowledge of the development of Indian children would be of great use for evolving appropriate curricula and teaching methods. For this purpose, longitudinal studies of children from birth to 18 years of age will have to be conducted in all parts of the country.

Very little scientific work has been done on curriculum construction so far. During the last 60 years, the curricula of elementary schools have been revised from time to time and each revision has made them bulkier than before. It is now necessary to systematically analyse the existing curricula and to eliminate all the redundant and inert information or programmes included in them as well as to incorporate several essential matters that have been left out at present, with a view to making them more meaningful to children at the particular stage of their development. A proper grading of the different units of the curricula and their sequential arrangement according to classes also needs considerable attention.

The development of proper techniques of teaching in elementary schools has not yet received adequate attention, owing mainly to the fact that the training institutions for elementary teachers are not generally of the standard to undertake competent research in this field and the university departments of education and training colleges, which have the competence to undertake the studies if they so desire, have not interested themselves in elementary education. The teaching of the mother tongue and in particular, the teaching of reading, needs a good deal of research. In England and America, a good deal of research has been done in the teaching of reading. But this is related to the English language which has special problems of spelling and a very simple script. It is not, therefore, quite applicable to Indian languages which are phonetic in character but have a script with numerous characters. Original research in the teaching of reading of the Indian languages will, therefore, have to be undertaken. Similarly, good methods for teaching arithmetic, social studies, general science, arts and crafts at the elementary stage will also

have to be developed.

Research is also needed for preparing standard vocabularies in all Indian languages for use in elementary schools. For this purpose, the recognition and reproduction vocabularies of children in the different age-groups will have to be compiled and lists of words most commonly used will have to be prepared in all the Indian languages. These will be of great assistance to writers of textbooks and to teachers.

Reading interests of children have not been studied on an adequate scale. A good deal of research in this field is necessary, especially for planning the supplementary reading material for children.

Very little work has been done so far in preparing guide books for the use of teachers in elementary schools. Such guide books are urgently needed on problems relating to child psychology and development in order to enable them to understand children better and to deal more efficiently with their problems, for the teaching of all the different subjects included in the curriculum, for extracurricular activities, for general organisation of elementary schools and such other related matters. These will have to be prepared in all the Indian languages and their use popularised through the training institutions.

The problems of single-teacher schools need special attention and a good deal of experimental work has to be undertaken to develop good methods of teaching which are specially suitable to these institutions.

Methods of teaching suited to large-size classes have to be evolved on financial grounds because classes of large size seem to be inescapable in the near future. The methods of teaching which are now dealt with in training institutions are mainly applicable to small-sized classes and this creates problems when teachers trained in these methods are required to face huge classes. It is, therefore, essential to evolve proper methods of handling bigger classes. This research has a very high priority and if properly developed, it will yield very significant and useful results.

#### PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND ANCILLARY SERVICES

At present, very little data is available regarding building costs

in elementary education. Random sample studies will, therefore, have to be conducted in all states to ascertain the extent to which satisfactory building accommodation is provided at present to elementary schools and the additional accommodation needed to meet the needs of existing enrolment. Such studies will enable us to determine the approximate expenditure required for bringing all the elementary schools to the prescribed minimum standards in respect of buildings. Similarly, we have very little data about the building costs per pupil in different parts of the country. For this purpose, type designs will have to be prepared for buildings of all types, from single-teacher schools in small villages to multi-teacher schools in big towns and cities, and the cost per pupil for building construction would have to be worked out in detail for all the different conditions one generally comes across. Studies on the same lines will also have to be carried out to prepare standardised lists of equipment required by elementary schools of all types, the extent to which existing elementary schools are adequately provided with equipment and the additional expenditure that would be necessary in order to bring all the existing elementary schools to a prescribed minimum standard in regard to equipment.

Studies are also needed to determine the capital costs involved in the establishment of training institutions for elementary teachers. The details will have to be worked out separately for buildings (including classrooms, hostels, staff quarters, craft sheds, administrative offices, gymnasium etc.) and equipment (including furniture for the school and the hostel, library, laboratory, teaching aids and craft materials).

It is also necessary to conduct research in the proper designing of buildings and in evolving new methods of construction and in the economic use of materials with a view to reducing the capital cost per pupil. The Central Building Research Institute of the Roorkee University has done a good deal of useful work on this subject. The COPP Team on School Buildings has also made important recommendations; but considerably more research is needed in the field and the problem has to be studied in all the different climatic and local conditions that exist in the country. Since a large-scale building programme will have to be taken up in the Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans, research in this sector

will have to be given the highest priority. It will also lead to significant and useful results.

Hardly any work has been done in designing suitable and economic equipment and teaching aids for schools. It is necessary to examine this matter immediately because a programme to provide adequate equipment to all elementary schools will have to be given the highest priority in the Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans. Methods will also have to be evolved for preparing as much of this material as possible in educational institutions themselves through the introduction of productive work in schools and colleges. Here is another area where research would have a significant and immediately useful role to play.

Experimental research work is needed in developing health services for elementary schools. On financial grounds, the costs of this scheme will have to be kept down to the minimum. There is also a great shortage of technical personnel. Methods will, therefore, have to be evolved to train elementary teachers in providing health services in such a way that the maximum use could be made of the limited number of doctors available. More emphasis will have to be placed on the preventive aspects of the problem and teachers will have to be trained for this. Scientific surveys and studies of the health problems of children will have to be carried out from time to time and in different parts of the country with a view to making school health programme efficient, effective and economic. For instance, the School Health Committee has pointed out that we have to undertake surveys and investigations (1) to obtain detailed knowledge of health and disease in the school population in different areas of the country with reference to incidence, prevalence of morbidity and mortality and other data related to the epidemiology of specific diseases and defects ; (2) community understanding of and participation in problems and programmes of school health and school meals; (3) evaluation of different procedures used in school health programme to determine the effect of the school meals programme on growth and development, social adjustment, emotional reaction and food practices followed at home, and to develop suitable minimum standards of sanitary facilities, local nutrition requirements, health teaching and training of personnel.

Research and experimental work will also have to be undertaken with a view to ascertaining and lengthening the

average life of textbooks, and programmes would have to be evolved with the object of providing books and reading materials to all children in elementary schools at a minimum financial cost and with the minimum demands on the supplies of paper.

#### ADMINISTRATION, SUPERVISION AND FINANCE

The administrative and financial issues of elementary education are extremely important; and yet they have received very little attention so far. This is, therefore, a very significant area for research.

The existing system of supervision is largely ineffective. Studies will, therefore, have to be carried out to ascertain the manner in which it is functioning at present and to determine the several points at which wastage results. Research is also needed to evolve democratic and scientific methods of supervision and working with teachers and for training the supervisors adequately in their new role of the friend, philosopher and guide of teachers.

The administration of elementary education involves a very large number of functions. Some of these, such as the maintenance of a school building, are extremely simple; while others, such as equalisation of educational opportunities at the national level, are extremely complex. Research is needed to study each separate function involved in the administration of elementary education to determine the most effective and economical methods of performing it and to decide the level (village, block, district, state or Centre) at which it can be best performed.

The basic issues in the administration of elementary education are three: (i) The financial responsibility for elementary education has to be *centralised*, and apart from the parent, the local, State and the Central Governments have to share the burden ; (ii) the administrative responsibility for elementary education has to be *decentralised* so that, in the final analysis, the responsibilities at the local level become the heaviest and those at the national level, the least; and (iii) this imbalance between centralisation of financial responsibility on the one hand and decentralisation of administrative responsibility on the other, should be adjusted through a suitable system of grant-in-aid which transfers funds from the higher to the lower levels. This complex problem raises innumerable issues which need detailed investigation.

It is essential that the elementary school should become a real community centre. For this purpose, the functioning of the school has to be so oriented that it would best assist in the development of an overall reconstruction programme of the local community. On the other hand, a local organisation of adult public has also to be built up and charged with the responsibility of looking after the needs and development of the local elementary school. This programme will have to be developed intensively during the next 10 years and research is, therefore, essential in school-community relations and for evolving suitable techniques of taking the school closer to the community and for training teachers and the local leaders.

Very little work has been done so far in the costing of elementary education. In the last analysis, it is the cost per pupil of the programme as a whole that matters most; but this itself is dependent on a large number of factors such as salaries and allowances of teachers, the components of various non-teacher costs and capital expenditure involved in providing buildings and equipment. The precise manner in which all these factors operate, the areas where avoidable wastages occur and the manner in which they can be prevented, and the methods by which the best results can be attained with the minimum of financial investment have to be studied. In view of the limited resources available, these programmes which try to increase efficiency, reduce costs and stop leakages will obviously have a very high priority.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A few of the major issues in elementary education in which research could be immediately developed with advantage have been indicated above. This is, by no means, an exhaustive list and it covers only a fraction of the total volume of research needed. This exercise would, however, have served its purpose if it indicates a few areas of priority and also suggests their connection with the vast programme of developing elementary education that would have to be undertaken during the Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans with a view to fulfilling the Directive of Article 45 of the Constitution.

---

## 10

---

### Universal Elementary Education in India\*†

---

#### I

The theme I proposed to discuss on this occasion is that of *universal elementary education in India* for children in the age-group 6-14. I would like to discuss why this programme, which all regard as that of the highest priority, is still not making adequate progress and suggest an alternative approach which may help us to implement it effectively in the foreseeable future.

#### II

The principle that liberal education is the right of every individual is comparatively of recent origin. In our ancient tradition, liberal education of the higher level (where the medium was generally Sanskrit for Hindus and Arabic or Persian for Muslims) was confined only to a small minority of the upper or sacred castes or classes. Even elementary liberal education was confined to a small class of upper social strata (about one to five per cent of the children in the age-groups 5-15, mostly boys. For the remaining children, vocational education, learnt in a non-formal manner through apprenticeship or active participation was considered adequate. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, therefore, there were innumerable small elementary schools in almost all towns and villages, but they enrolled only between 1 and 5 per cent of the children of school-going age and the percentage of literacy among the adults was only about three per cent (about 6 per cent among men and almost negligible among women). The enlightened educated Indians who saw the provision of universal

---

\*Convocation address at the Pune University. (March 1977).

†Member Secretary, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.



liberal education in the advanced countries of the West, and interpreted it as the most important contributory factor to their power and prosperity, were impressed with the need to provide a minimum liberal education to all children in India. A demand to this effect was first put forward by Dadabhai Naoroji before the Indian Education Commission (1882). Gokhale moved, first a resolution, and then a Bill, in the Central Legislature demanding compulsory education of four years for all children (1910-12). These efforts failed; but they led to the passing of compulsory education Acts in all parts of India for providing four or five years' liberal education to all children (1918-31).

Mahatma Gandhi added a very important new dimension to this demand. He did not like the traditional dichotomy between liberal and vocational education and was of the view that good education was an Integrated combination of liberal and vocational education and that an education of seven or eight years (equivalent in content to the old matriculation *minus* English *plus* craft) should be provided to every child.

It is in this context that we must interpret Article 45 of the Constitution. It was a fulfilment of a deep and sacred national yearning pursued for over 70 years to provide good education, both liberal and vocational, to every child, irrespective of caste, colour, race, religion or sex.

### III

The design the framers of our Constitution had in view was as simple as it was magnificent. They knew that political power, knowledge, and wealth were very unequally distributed in the society and that these imbalances had to be redressed if the new society they had set their hearts on a society based on freedom, equality, justice and dignity of the individual had to be created. They therefore introduced a three-fold package deal in the Constitution:

- They introduced adult franchise, equality for women; and certain special protection measures for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for a better redistribution of political power;
- They directed that the State should strive to provide free and compulsory education to all children till they attain the age of 14 years so as to secure a better redistribution of knowledge.

- They also directed that the State should strive to provide the minimum essential standard of living to the people and to prevent concentration of economic power in a few persons or groups to achieve a better distribution of economic power.

This was treated as a package because the distribution of political power, knowledge and economic power is obviously interdependent and because a simultaneous attempt for redistribution has to be made on all the three fronts to achieve worthwhile and early results. Its main weakness however lay in not placing an equal emphasis on the three processes. The first set of political changes could be introduced by legislation. They therefore became immediately effective and succeeded considerably as is shown by the political maturity of the electorate evidenced in our recent elections. But the other two programmes did not receive an equal emphasis. Not being amenable to a mere legislative remedy, they were left to the good sense of the Governments that would be in power from time to time. The Constitution makers of course hoped that these objectives would have the top-most priority in the programmes of the Governments because they owe their existence, in the last analysis, to the vote of the *Daridranarayana* of India.

I am mainly concerned, in this address, with the second of these three programmes, namely, the provision of free and compulsory education for all children in the age-group 6-14. Here, let me say that we have made considerable progress in the last 30 years but our failures are even more glaring. Our best achievement is the provision of *facilities*: there is now a primary school (classes I-V) within walking distance from the home of nearly 97 per cent of the children. More than half the children also have a middle school (classes VI-VIII) within easy distance of their homes. Anyway, it does not appear difficult to provide a school, teaching classes I-VII or I-VIII, within a walking distance from the home of every child and the goal may be reached in five to ten years. Even in the matter of enrolment of children, we have made considerable headway: the total enrolment in classes I-V is now 68 million and that in classes VI-VIII about 18 million. It may also be said that about 86 children out of every 100 do enter schools at present. Those who do not enter at all are mostly girls and the children of weaker sections of the community like scheduled castes and tribes or landless agricultural labourers. The task undone, however, is very difficult and supreme efforts would be

needed to bring into schools these children who form the hard core of poverty and deprivation. Unfortunately, our greatest weakness is in retention: Of every 100 children enrolled in schools, only 50 reach class V and only 25 reach class VIII. In other words, our education is somewhat effective only for half the children and fully effective only for one-fourth. This huge wastage makes our educational system most inefficient. What is worse, the rate of reduction in wastage is so slow — less than five per cent in a decade—that there is little scope of fulfilling the directive of Article 45 of the Constitution in the near future. This was to have been fulfilled by 1960. We first revised the target date to 1966, then to 1976, and now to 1986. But even the last target date seems to be unachievable, and some State plans talk of 2010 or even 2030 as the probable year of reaching this goal.

Why have we failed in this important national goal? The most common reasons given are two : sudden and large increase in population and lack of resources. While I recognise the significance of these issues, I would like to point out that we must achieve our goal in spite of them. In fact, the spread of education among the people, and especially among women, can be the most powerful instrument of promoting family planning itself, as the experience of Kerala has now shown. Secondly, we cannot wait till we are rich to provide education to our people. In fact to give good education to the people can in itself be a powerful method of reducing poverty. The less we talk of these excuses in future, the better for all concerned.

The real reasons for the failure, in my opinion, are five. The first is the decision to separate education of adults from that of children. We have accorded the lowest priority to adult education, spread of literacy, or even non-formal adult education which receives less than one per cent of total educational expenditure. Now it is well-known that a literate parent, and especially a literate woman, is the most effective method of ensuring that the children receive education; and cases of non-enrolment or wastage are extremely few in the literate or educated families. It is therefore obvious that our programme of providing universal education to children must go hand in hand with that of educating the adults, formally or informally. What we now assume is that a child which, for some reason, escapes school or fails to become literate (and the proportion of such children is about 40 to 50 per cent) has no option but to live and die as an illiterate and

condemned individual. There is no justification for such an inhuman and wasteful approach to the solution of the problem.

The second reason for our failure is the wrong tool we are using to spread education among the masses. Our existing system of elementary education has a single point of entry (class I at the age of about 5 or 6), sequential promotions from class to class at the end of each year, and an obligation on children to put in full-time attendance. It also uses only full-time professional teachers which adds tremendously to its cost. What is worse, it is mostly a bookish system without adequate involvement of children in socially useful productive work so that it tends to perpetuate white-collar attitude. What we are trying to do is to extend this middle-class-oriented system to the society as a whole. Such an attempt cannot succeed; and even if it does, it can only end in a disaster. We must therefore realise that we need a radical transformation of this educational system before it becomes possible or desirable to make it universal. We must have multiple entry points and children who have missed education should be encouraged and assisted to begin it at any later date that may be convenient to them. There should be no rigidity about annual promotions from class to class and grown-up children who begin their education late should be helped to complete their studies in as short a time as possible. There should be no insistence on full-time attendance and children who work should be taught in such time as they can spare. Instead of saying, as we do at present, that children will either learn on a full-time basis or go without education altogether, we must say that all children shall learn, on a full-time basis, if possible and on a part-time basis, if necessary. We must also transform the content of education by introduction of activities, work-experience, etc. so that the schools train for work as well as for leisure and culture and their power to attract and hold children is considerably increased. Finally we must abandon our exclusive emphasis on full-time, professional teachers and use all the teaching resources available in the community.

The third important reason for our failure is non-involvement of the people. In the post- Independence period, we have shown an over-dependence on the bureaucracy and used it as almost the sole instrument of promoting development. Universal elementary education, for instance, has been left solely to the primary school teachers and inspectors. Bureaucracy is necessary and has no doubt an important role to play in all development programmes.

But development is also a political issue; and developmental programmes like universal elementary education, which affect every family and almost every individual, are essentially political and cannot be handled by bureaucracy alone. To awaken parents to realise the value of education, to prepare them to make the sacrifices for the purpose, to sweep children into schools in a mass movement, to galvanise communities into action, to make schools more meaningful, to tap community resources for educational purposes, and to create and maintain a mass movement without which such massive and mass-oriented programmes do not succeed, is essentially a political task and has to be attempted on a political basis. All this becomes particularly relevant when the programme is to be implemented, not in a gradualistic style spread over generations, but in a blitzkrieg over a few years. Unless we realise this and take the necessary steps, the chances of the programme succeeding are rather bleak.

The fourth major reason for failure is our inability to improve the living standards of the masses. A programme of universal education cannot be built on the basis of abject poverty or in conditions of inhuman existence. A programme of eradicating poverty ought therefore to have been accorded the highest priority and developed side by side with that of universal elementary education. But this was not done. Whether from the point of view of employment or increasing incomes, or making more and better health services available, the conditions of the vast masses of people have shown little improvement, if any; and there is little possibility of the schemes of educational expansion succeeding under such circumstances. The programmes of elimination of poverty and of providing universal elementary education must go hand in hand.

The fifth important reason for the failure of the programme is the cooling down in the missionary zeal of the educated intelligentsia. Prior to 1947, the educated of this country showed an unparalleled enthusiasm for improving the lot of the common people, partly due to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, and partly to the need to take the poor along with them in the struggle against an alien power. Unfortunately, a sea-change came over these attitudes in the post-Independence period. The educated classes of India and other elite groups, who then came into power, were now more interested in their own advancement and in their own welfare than in the well-being of the masses; and an era of 'input' (what do I give to my people and to my country?) was succeeded

by an era of 'output' (what can I get from my people and my country?). There are two things which I dislike most about the educated Indian: one is his arrogance and contempt for the common man of India because he has not received formal education although he may be more cultured and wise; and the second is his total indifference to the suffering and poverty around. I have seen these two weaknesses in their worst forms in the last 30 years. It is obvious that a major programme for the development of the common people like the provision of universal elementary education cannot succeed in such an environment.

## V

Assuming that the above analysis is correct, where do we go from here or what programme of action can we recommend? I would like to make a few concrete proposals for the consideration of all concerned in this context.

- 1) Let us remember that the best way to solve this problem of universal elementary education is to attack it on a war-footing and to solve it within a short period say, of ten years. Long-term programmes defeat their own purpose because the momentum slows down, population increases and costs go up. We must, therefore, determine that we shall solve this problem within the next ten years, by 1986 at the latest as recommended by the Education Commission.
- 2) We must make a beginning at once by modifying our formal system of elementary education with the introduction of multiple-entry and part-time schools, and use of non-professional teachers. There should be every encouragement for children who begin in class I at the age of 5 or 6 and proceed ahead by doing one class every year. As a supplement to this, there should be special part-time classes for children who begin later in the age-group 9-11 or 11-14; and these children should be allowed to complete their education upto class V in a short period of 12 to 24 months. The educational system should maintain a contact with each in the age-group 6-14, either on a full-time or on a part-time basis.
- 3) The content and methodology of elementary education will have to be totally changed. It should be built, not round

mere transmission of inert knowledge as the present system is, but round work-experience and programmes of development and community service. It should have a relevance to the life in the community which should show improvement because of education. In other words, it is highly wasteful to run education and development as two separate systems. It would be far more economical and effective to run these two together as a single integrated system of education leading to development and development, in its turn, leading to further and better education.

- 4) We should develop the whole programme as a mass movement in which the poor people and hundreds of volunteers from among the educated work together in the joyous adventure of sharing knowledge and building up the country. It should be organised, not so much on the basis of a paid mercenary service of professionals, however competent, but on the basis of a large-scale use of committed and enthusiastic voluntary workers.
- 5) I would suggest that large-scale experiments should be started in not less than two community development blocks in each district where intensive efforts should be made to bring every child in the age-group 6-14 under instruction within a period of not more than five years. There should be a house-to-house census of all children in the area and a concrete programme should be drawn up, separately for each community, under which every child shall be educated in the best possible manner, either in formal or non-formal education. The experience gained in experiments of this type will be extremely valuable and it should be possible to generalise it to cover all parts of the country during the Sixth Five Year Plan.

A programme of this type will undoubtedly need full Government support and large financial investment. But it will also need something which is even more important, namely, the organisation of a mass movement for educational expansion and improvement and the services of millions of young men and women who are committed to the development of the country and determined to wipe out the stigma of ignorance, ill-health and poverty. I don't think this is something which is beyond us if we have the necessary will.

### Higher Education

---

## Higher Education in India: Some Suggestions for Reorganisation (1972)\*

---

The *object* of this paper is to indicate a programme for the reorganisation of higher education whose present state of ill-health is causing grave concern to all.

The existing situation in higher education and its causes are too well known to need any detailed or lengthy statement. We have only limited resources to invest in higher education. We are also committed to a policy of open-door access to higher education which leads to unprecedented expansion, now at about 13 per cent per year. This leads to:

- a) problems of *size*, as in Calcutta University, which make good administration almost impossible;
- b) *deterioration of standards*, especially in the rapidly growing number of colleges of arts, commerce and law;
- c) *diminution in the motivation of the students* due to poor quality of education, lack of its relevance to immediate problems, and the ever-widening distance between a degree and a job;
- d) *students' unrest*; and
- e) *a spiraling increase in educated unemployment*.

The obvious solutions are two. The first is to secure an increase in investment to match the rise in enrolments and the qualitative needs of higher education in an increasingly competitive world.

---

\* *New Frontiers in Education*, Vol. 2, No.1. 1972.

Dr. Kothari, for instance, has pleaded for an initial large investment, say, Rs. 200 crores or so and an annual increase at 20 per cent per year. Alternatively, one may agree for a policy of selective admissions in keeping with the resources and employment opportunities available and the maintenance of proper standards. The First has not been possible in the past and is less for any to be so in the near future; and the second has been found to be totally un-acceptable, socially and politically. Hence we have been in an impasse and the situation has been drifting from bad to worse in most areas and in some, even to hopelessness or despair. The question is: any third solution (or solutions) possible? I hold that there is such a solution which can make a break-through in spite of the limitation on resources and the continuance of the open-door policy.

It is this that I propose briefly to outline in the paragraphs that follow.

#### PRESENT SITUATION

Let us first understand what our open-door policy really means. While we have opposed the idea of making all admissions to higher education on a selective basis, we have accepted, surprisingly enough, a policy of selective admissions in several individual sectors. For instance, admissions to medical colleges are highly selective. So were the admissions to engineering colleges until very recently. Even now, they continue to be selective in IITs and several other institutions. Admissions to science courses are generally selective, even in mofussil colleges. All admissions to good institutions are selective and in some, the selectivity is as high as one in 50 or even 100. The post-graduate courses generally admit students on a selective basis. All this is accepted and has become a part of our cultural, administrative and organisational pattern. Hence, our demand for the individual's right to higher education or insistence on an open-door policy means only one thing: *every* student who desires higher education shall be provided access to *some* institution (however poor) and to *some* course (however useless). And we meet it precisely in the same way by creating a large and ever expanding pool of arts, commerce and law colleges (some science colleges also fall in the same category), poorly staffed and poorly equipped, and allow

free access to them to all who seek. An impossible demand is thus met in a mechanical or one might say even in an ironically vengeful manner. The victims of this mindless game the unfortunate youth look up for sustenance and are not fed. But who cares?

My contention, therefore, is that it is wrong to assert that we demand *free access to all higher education*. We do not. It is more wrong still to assert that we are opposed to selective admissions. *We have lived and continue to live with them*. Over the years, therefore, we have evolved our own peculiar formula to reconcile the conflicting claims of quantity and quality. This is to say, we have created a dual system in which there is a core of good, worthwhile and useful higher education (to which admissions are made on a selective basis), surrounded by a large and increasing periphery of undergraduate colleges of arts, commerce, law (or even science) which are of poor quality and to which access is provided to all who seek. This is indeed a vicious dual system which becomes all the more terrible because even the average or below average children of the 'haves' get access to the core institutions while even the talented among the 'have-nots' are often denied it.

Why is it that so patently unjust a system continues to thrive and persist in our midst and why is it that even its victims, the have-not classes, seem to defend its existence and demand its continuance with even a greater gusto than the 'haves' themselves? The answer is multiple and sociologically interesting.

- a) The haves are able to get fairly good higher education for their children because the selective basis of these good institutions is heavily weighted in their favour or in favour of all children coming from families with good social and economic backgrounds. Their fate, therefore, is not at stake. Moreover, they also realise that the small islands of quality to which they have access can be preserved only if they allow a large periphery of slums to which the have-nots are given a free access. Hence they are not really keen on changing the status quo which is to their advantage.
- b) There are three major groups among those who use the non-selective system of poor quality and doubtful utility.

The first and probably the largest group is that of the first generation learners. A very small proportion of these has parents educated in secondary schools; but in the case of the large majority, they are educated only in primary schools or are even illiterate. To their parents, higher education is the long-hoped for dream, the royal road to upward social mobility, the escape from the drudgery of their existence, and the golden opportunity they have missed for themselves and which they feel duty-bound to provide for their children at any cost. Their faith is understandable and deserves sympathy. If it turns out to be tragic and misplaced, it is certainly not their fault.

- c) The second group is that of urban middle class parents who have an immediate problem on their hands. They find that their sons complete secondary schools at about the age of 16 or 17. They can not get a job at this tender age even if there is one available. So they do not know what to do with these young boys and decide to send them to the college as a lesser evil to the other two alternatives open, viz., to leave them on the streets or to keep them at home. It is realised that this does not solve the problem. But 'marking time' is an accepted (and sometimes the only available) technique to meet a difficult situation. In the case of a girl, the problem is still worse. She completes her secondary education even earlier, 15 or 16. As the age of marriage is now about 20, her Prince Charming will not come along for another four years. She is likely to be a nuisance at home and cannot be left to her own devices. So she is sent to a college with the additional hope that her chances in the marriage market may also be improved. It will thus be seen that in all these cases education becomes, not a preparation for work, but a substitute for it. All that the parents ask for is a temporary 'cattle-pound' for their young sons and daughters and they are grateful for getting it.
- d) The third group is of ambitious parents who hope to get good jobs, preferably under Government, for their children. Our entire system of recruitment, especially in the public sector, is such that it has become almost impossible to get a worthwhile job in any sector, private

or public, without a university degree. This strengthens the traditional urge for a university degree, based on social and cultural aspirations through strong economic incentives. More and more parents are therefore compelled to join the race for giving 'more and more' education to their children in order that they might successfully capture jobs at 'lower and lower' levels. As this economic necessity for higher education continues to intensify, the demand of this group of parents for free access to higher education continues to grow.

It is obvious that all these demands are real, socially urgent and politically irresistible. There is thus a strong case for the continuance of the status quo, especially because the energy and resources required to bring about a radical transformation are not available. By a tacit consent of all the interests involved, therefore the existing system continues unchanged and as it grows, all its evils, to which a reference has already been made, continue to grow in magnitude and potential menace.

#### A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

It is to this situation that we need a solution, subject to two important limitations:

- (1) the additional investment to be made from public funds should be comparatively small and within feasible limits; and
- (2) every person who desires to go in for higher education should have access to some form of higher education.

One point becomes clear at the very outset: if both these limitations are insisted upon, the dualism in the present system will have to be continued in some form. It may be possible to organise, within the resources likely to be available, a fairly compact system of higher education which maintains proper standards and is adequately oriented to the employment opportunities available. But such a system will necessarily be highly selective and hence unacceptable. On the other hand, we do not have the resources to provide good higher education to all who may seek it. Consequently there is no alternative to the

conveyance of the existing dual system. But it will be possible to make major modifications in this system with a view to eliminating its objectionable features, improving standards and introducing a much greater element of social justice. Even this would be no mean achievement; and it will certainly be an immense improvement over the existing situation. This, then is the basic objective of my proposals which include the following main programmes:

a) Demand for and Access to Higher Education

1. Expanding the sector of institutions operated upon a selective basis and introducing a significant element of social justice therein.
2. In the non-selective sector, reducing the economic incentives which artificially heighten the demand for higher education.
3. Maintenance of proper standards in undergraduate affiliated colleges through prescription of proper conditions of affiliation and their rigorous enforcement and the development of correspondence courses on a large scale.
4. Delinking of the compulsory subsidy from public funds to mere expansion of facilities at the undergraduate stage and provision of fee-grants to students on principles of merit and social justice.

b) Structure of Higher Education

5. Restricting the work of the universities mainly to postgraduate teaching and research.
6. Establishment of Boards of Collegiate Education for metropolitan cities and separately for each State to grant affiliation to colleges and award the first degree in arts, science, commerce and law.
7. Creation of autonomous colleges on a large and effective scale.
8. Establishment of special research institutes as centres of excellence.

c) Content and Techniques of Teaching in Higher Education

9. Reform and upgrading of curricula on the principles of significance and relevance; adoption of dynamic methods of teaching and evaluation
10. Preparation of instructional materials, in-service education of teachers, and special programmes of student aid.

I shall discuss these proposals in some detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### SELECTIVE SECTOR

Let me begin with that sector in higher education access to which is organised, even at present, on a selective basis. It will include (1) all university departments, (2) colleges of agriculture, engineering and medicine, and (3) all colleges of arts, commerce, law or science which have established a reputation for quality and in which, because of sheer demand, admission has to be made on a selective basis. The programme of reform needed for this sector is threefold:

- a) An attempt should be made to strengthen the existing institutions to enable them to function in peace and help them to grow better.
- b) There should be a special programme under the UGC in which a continuous effort is made to identify institutions with a growth potential and help them to raise their standards so that they find a place in the selective sector. It should also be an objective of this preference to ensure that good quality institutions in the selective sector are distributed fairly equitably in different parts of the country.
- c) An intensive effort should be made to introduce a significant element of social justice in the selective sector. This is probably the most important programme to be developed in this context. As the Education Commission pointed out, we do adopt the selective approach in several sectors but have done hardly any serious work for evolving appropriate methods of selection. We place too much of reliance on examination marks which are an index, not so much of the innate ability of the student, as of his



socioeconomic background, his family environment and the type of school-primary and secondary- to which he had access. Consequently our existing selection procedures are over-weighted in favour of children coming from the well-to-do families so that the good quality selective sector in higher education is practically dominated by the top 5-10 per cent of the social elite. As a nation committed to socialism, we cannot accept this tie-up between quality and privilege and we will have to initiate vigorous measures to ensure that talented children from the under privileged groups will also have an adequate access to this sector of higher education. To begin with, a large and imaginative programme of scholarships will have to be developed at the secondary stage so that talented children from the under-privileged groups are identified fairly early and assisted to get into good schools so that their academic performance improves and they qualify increasingly for admission to institutions in the selective sector. The scheme of scholarships in good secondary schools for talented children from rural areas or the reservation of 25 per cent of the seats in public or similar schools of good quality for talented but economically handicapped children are good illustrations of the programmes needed in this context. These will have to be expanded and similar other programmes adopted to secure the ends of social justice and to dissociate *quality* from *privilege*. Secondly, steps will have to be taken to reserve seats, in all institutions in the selective sector, for children from under-privileged social groups and areas and a combined programme of scholarships and placement will have to be developed to utilise them fully. It is necessary to develop a further ancillary programme under which these institutions will be able to provide individual guidance and assistance to such children to enable them to avail themselves properly of the opportunities provided.

One point deserves notice. There has been a general feeling of hostility in the country against any attempt to develop a group of quality institutions on a selective basis. A careful analysis will show that this hostility cannot be taken at its face value and that

it would be wrong to conclude that the people will not support any programmes for promoting excellence which can only be done on a limited and selective basis. What the public resents is the elitism that underlies such attempts, the link that inevitably springs up between quality and privilege, the monopolisation of such institutions by the urban, well-to-do or powerful social groups and the perpetuation of their dominance through such educational opportunities. If privilege cannot be separated from quality, the people would rather go without quality than tolerate privilege. Hence, it is imperative to ensure that the continuance of the selective sector in higher education is made contingent upon the introduction of an adequate element of social justice. This alone will get it popular acceptance and support. The significance of the programme therefore cannot be over-emphasized.

#### DEFLATION OF UNACADEMIC PRESSURES

Let us now turn to the non-selective sector of higher education. Here the most important aspect to be noted is that admission will not be refused to any one who desires it. There will thus be no formal selection or rejection. But as everyone does not necessarily benefit from higher education, it is essential to develop a large and efficient programme of educational guidance so that the young are helped to make a proper selection for themselves; and while every academic objective is to be encouraged, it is equally important to ensure that non-academic incentives do not exert an unhealthy influence on this sector and stimulate unwanted expansion.

The latter is a very important objective and the following programmes are suggested with a view to deflating some of the non-academic factors that stimulate expansion in higher education at present.

- 1) It was as early as 1882 that the first Education Commission recommended that secondary education should be diversified and vocationalised so that it becomes terminal for the majority of students who can then be diverted into different walks of life. This is really the key to reducing pressures on university admissions. But in spite of the repetition of this recommendation by several other

commissions and committees, including the Education Commission, very little has been achieved in the last ninety years. Our system of secondary education is still the least vocationalised in the world and it still "fits a boy for admission to a college and almost unfits him for everything else". It is high time that we tried to grapple with the problem earnestly. It implies larger investment, creation of more jobs at the intermediate level, and reducing the large differential in earnings that now obtains between the middle and higher level workers or between those who have received secondary and higher education. From the academic point of view, it implies the identification of appropriate vocational training programmes, formulation of curricula, preparation of instructional materials, organisation of appropriate institutional structures and training of teachers.

- 2) There is the old recommendation of the Mudaliar Committee that graduates should be ruled out from clerical jobs by prescribing a suitable upper age limit. This, it is hoped, will prevent many a person from entering the university merely to become a clerk. It is doubtful whether such a bar on the recruitment of graduates as clerks. It is doubtful whether such a bar on the recruitment of graduates as clerks can be legally placed or whether it is even desirable to do so. One is not also sure that such a bar, even if it is found to be feasible and desirable, will act as a disincentive for higher education. But it is a pity that no clear decision in the matter has been taken and that the recommendation continues to be discussed indefinitely. It would be desirable to state a definite policy on the issue, once and for all.
- 3) A more promising recommendation is that of Prof. M.V. Mathur and Shri R.A.Gopalaswamy to the effect that the recruitment to all the major civil services of the Centre and States (and also to the senior posts in the private sector if possible) should be done at the end of the secondary stage and that the persons so selected should be given higher education at state costs in selected institutions of good quality. The scheme has many commendable features

which entitle it to a serious consideration on its own merits. But it will certainly have a salutary effect on the expansion of higher education.

These suggestions are merely indicative of what can be done to reduce the pressures on admissions to higher education. They do not exhaust all the possibilities which need careful exploration. They do not exhaust all the possibilities which need careful exploration. What one would like to emphasise in this context therefore is the need to adopt appropriate measures which will tend to reduce the non-academic pressures which now lead to an unhealthy and unwanted expansion which does no good, either to society, or to its recipients.

#### MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS IN THE NON-SELECTIVE SECTOR

The main weakness in our present treatment of the non-selective sector is not that we do not maintain proper standards; that is not possible at the present level of investment and enrolments - but that we do not insist on any *minimum* requirements and that there is really no level below which an undergraduate college in arts, commerce or law (or even science) is not allowed to sink. It is this that leads to a continuous increase in substandard affiliated colleges. This is really tantamount to cheating because we sell something labelled as 'higher education' which it certainly is not. 'It may also be described as an exploitation of the simple and trusting parents who often make immense sacrifices to buy this commodity for their children. Without making any attempt to control expansion, therefore, it is necessary to show a much greater concern for the maintenance of at least some minimum standards in higher education that we have done in the past.

Three programmes put forward by the Education Commission can be suggested in this context. The first is to make the conditions of granting affiliation to undergraduate colleges of arts, science, commerce or law more stringent than what they are at present and to enforce them rigorously. The University of Madras insists on what may be described as the most rigorous conditions for recognition and requires the sponsors of a college to collect Rs. 5 lakhs as an endowment fund and an equal amount for land, buildings and equipment. In some other areas, a college

can be started with Rs. 15,000 or even less. Obviously, the maintenance of even the minimum standards shows immense variations from one university to another. It would be an interesting study to find out the minimum conditions insisted upon by universities for granting affiliation to colleges and the effect this has on the quality of the non-selective sector. An earnest effort has, therefore, to be made to insist upon a minimum initial financial effort when a college is being established and affiliated. There is no reason why this could not even be made the subject of Central Legislation.

Yet another measure needed to ensure at least some minimum standards in this sector is to ensure that each college admits only that number of students for which it is specifically affiliated, such number being fixed with reference to the facilities available. This is necessary because standards are diluted, not only by the initial absence of necessary facilities and staff, but also by large admissions far in excess of the capacity of the institution or department. This is already being done in the science courses; and an attempt should be made to extend the same principle to courses in arts and commerce as well.

These two measures will help to raise standards to some extent will improve the situation in the non-selective sector where the maintenance of even the minimum standards seems to be nobody's business. But will obviously have some restrictive effect on admissions. As the objective in this sector is to widen the opportunity for higher education to provide access to all who seek, a very large provision should be in for correspondence courses in all subjects. A good beginning in this direction has already been made. What is needed is a planned and vigorous expansion.

#### NEW SYSTEM OF GRANT-IN-AID

This brings me to the most important proposal I have for the reorganisation of higher education, viz., the adoption of a new system of grant-in-aid for all affiliated colleges (except those for agriculture, engineering or medicine), whether in the selective or non-selective sectors. At present, we give a grant-in-aid to the college and cover about 50-60 per cent of the total cost of education, the rest being met by fees, which implies that, as soon

as an individual decides to join a college, the public exchequer has to shell out a compulsory subsidy of half or more than half of the cost of his education. While I concede his right to join a college in his discretion, I do not see why the public funds should be under compulsory charge to subsidise his education unless it is in public interest to do so. For instance, if all that the parents need is a temporary care compound for their children, there is no reason why they should not pay for this baby-sitting. I therefore strongly feel that free access to higher education should be delinked from a compulsory subsidy from public funding by stopping all aid from public to affiliated colleges. They should maintain themselves by charging fees within prescribed limits. Such a reform is all the more necessary because the vast bulk of the system in higher education at present are the urban elite and the haves.

Instead, I suggest that the State should give grants to individual students to cover all their fees. The choice of the college should be left to the individual student and fees should be paid at the rates which the chosen college will be levying (I do visualise that the variation between the minimum and maximum rates to be permitted will be as 1:2) For payment of fee grants, two principles should be adopted: merit-cum-means and social justice. For instance, fee grants may be given to all students who secure a given percentage of marks, subject to a prescribed means. Fee grants may also be given to all eligible children from underprivileged groups or areas. We may even say that we shall support the higher education of one girl and one boy from each family, below a prescribed income level. It is obviously possible to lay down rational and acceptable principles of social justice and thus ensure that the higher education of no deserving but economically handicapped student is allowed to suffer because of the increase of fees due to stoppage of direct maintenance grants, to affiliated colleges.

In addition to fee grants, there could be a programme of loans for students who do not get fee grants. One could even argue that there need be no fee grants but only a system of fee-loans.

A new system of grant-in-aid of this type is socially more just than the present one. It has also other merits. It will make open access to higher education possible without burdening the public

exchequer. It will improve motivation of students. It will help to improve standards by fostering a healthy competitive spirit among colleges.\*

I have left our agricultural, engineering and medical colleges from this proposal. But there could be no objection if the plan is extended to cover them also.

A comprehensive view will have to be taken of the proposals for reforming the existing system of access to higher education because they form, as it were, a package deal. It is true that even under these proposals, the present dualism between the selective and non-selective sector continues. But very major modifications have been made to eliminate its objectionable features, to improve standards and to introduce a significant element of social justice. In the selective sector, access will be provided on an increasing scale to the talented but economically handicapped children, thus breaking up the close linkage between quality and privilege. In the non-selective sector, access will be free and larger than at present. But some concern will be shown for standards, at least to ensure that higher education is not a fraud or exploitation; the compulsion on the State to subsidise the education of the haves or the unfit will be done away with; and adequate financial support will be made available to ensure that the under-privileged groups are not prevented, on the ground of inability to pay fees, from availing themselves of this social service. Needless to say, this will be a tremendous improvement over the existing situation, almost a breakthrough.

#### SCOPE OF UNIVERSITIES

I shall now turn to some structural aspects of higher education. These are of crucial significance and unless they are satisfactorily solved no meaningful reform in higher education is possible.

The universities in India, by and large, are mainly concerned with two responsibilities: they do postgraduate teaching and

---

\* What has been suggested here is the discontinuance of ordinary maintenance grants to affiliated colleges. This will not affect the payment of grants for special programmes of student aid which will not only be continued but increased. This will further imply that fees in Government colleges also will be suitably upgraded on cover the cost basis.

research in their own departments; and they service affiliated colleges by grant of affiliation, prescription of curricula, and holding of the examination for the first degree. The second of these functions has become so large that the universities are not able to manage it in several cases. Moreover, it is even interfering with the first which is the proper function of the universities. I therefore think that a time has now come when the universities should be relieved of all responsibilities for affiliated colleges, including the holding of the examination for the first degree. This alone can provide the essential conditions in which they can perform their basic tasks of promoting higher education proper.

It may be of interest to have a historical perspective at this point. There was a time when the universities held the terminal examination for the secondary stage and also equated it with their own entrance examination. The system worked fairly well, at least administratively, so long as the number of secondary schools and examination candidates was small. But a point was soon reached when the system began to collapse. Boards of Secondary Education were therefore set up and the universities were relieved of this responsibility which they had assumed for secondary education. The result has been good for both. Over the last two or three decades, there has been so tremendous an expansion in affiliated colleges that a stage has now been reached when the universities need to be immediately relieved of all responsibilities for them also and for holding the first degree. Let us also not forget that our education for the first degree is really higher secondary education and that it may be called higher education only by courtesy. This reform therefore is essential and will be good for all concerned: the universities, the affiliated colleges, and the system of higher education in the country as a whole.

There will be one exception to this general rule. Centres of Advanced Study should have a small undergraduate section (with an annual intake of not more than 20-30), selected on a national basis and supported by scholarships. This will enable them to produce the top level talent needed for universities, research, and other walks of life.

#### COLLEGIATE BOARDS

Who will assume the responsibility for affiliated colleges which the universities will be shedding? I suggest that we may establish

Boards of Collegiate Education, created by Acts of State or Central Legislatures, and consisting of the representatives of all universities in a State, the affiliated colleges themselves and the State Government. They should have power to grant affiliation to colleges, to prescribe curricula, and to hold the first degree examination. There should be only one Collegiate Board in each metropolitan city and State (this will put an end to the competition for lowering standards which universities in a State often engage in) and it should be operated upon as a consortium of all the universities in the State or city, on the broad lines that Prof. M.V. Mathur has been speaking about.

All undergraduate colleges should be brought under the purview of the Collegiate Boards. The postgraduate colleges will have to seek affiliation with the universities for the master's degree courses and with the Collegiate Board for the first degree courses.

#### AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES

The creation of Boards of Collegiate Education will relieve the universities no doubt; but they will not solve the problem of size, especially in holding of examinations. It is, therefore, recommended that the concept of autonomous colleges put forward by the Education Commission should be adopted on a large scale and affiliated colleges should be made autonomous in the sense that they would be able to confer their own first degree. Apart from its other advantages, this will effectively reduce the number of students who will have to be dealt with by the Boards of Collegiate Education in the first degree examination.

The autonomous colleges may be given an option either to remain with the Boards of Collegiate Education or to affiliate themselves to a university, provided the university concerned also agrees. This is recommended because the association of autonomous colleges with the university will, without throwing any burden on the universities, help the colleges to improve standards. All non-autonomous colleges and all autonomous colleges which cannot be affiliated to a university will continue to remain with the Collegiate Board.

#### RESEARCH INSTITUTES

In view of the vast and varied needs of society, it is essential to build up another set of centres of excellence, viz., research institutes. These will be mainly devoted to research, but should also have a doctoral programme of high selectivity. They should work in close collaboration with universities and, in addition to regular staff, should provide fellowships so that it would be possible for university teachers to work at them from time to time. At a later stage, they may also be permitted to have a small but highly selective section for the second and first degree, the total enrolment at any stage not exceeding 200. The first target may be to have at least one such institute per state. Ultimately, they may earn the status of deemed universities and resemble the Centres of Advanced Study, except for their emphasis on research and applied research. Since there is already an organisation of this type for the natural sciences, the research institutes to be set-up in the next few years should be in the social sciences. Every care should be taken to avoid the pursuit of gigantism in any form. The institutes should remain small, with annual expenditures between Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs at the most.

All these proposals of structural reorganisation of higher education are intended to serve a number of important purposes and to eliminate some of the major problems we are now facing in university administration. Taken together, they will help to build up a number of centres of excellences and side by side, cater adequately to the large enrolments that will result from an open-door policy of access. They will allow the universities to function in comparative peace. With the introduction of the concept of autonomy, the foundations for a real improvement of affiliated colleges will be laid. The development of centres of advanced study in universities and of research institutes outside will provide the pace-setting institutions and centres of excellence which are so basic to any good system of higher education. It would be an advantage to treat all these proposals also as a package deal.

#### CONTENT, TEACHING AND EVALUATION

The core of education is content, teaching and evaluation, and

hence the most significant educational reforms are only those which deal with these basic issues. But the present position is such that one is prevented from dealing with these issues in an effective manner because of problems created by policies about access to higher education and traditional structural arrangements that have outlived their utility and are incapable of meeting present day situations. That is why these problems were dealt with first. While their significance is thus beyond dispute, they should nevertheless be regarded as means to an end, the end being the revolution to be brought about in content, teaching and evaluation in higher education.

The basic issues here are the need to revise and upgrade curricula on principles of relevance and significance and to adopt dynamic methods of teaching and evaluation. A special and intensive effort is needed to produce the needed textbooks for all these courses. So much has been thought about this subject and so much material is already available through the work done by the UGC that the problem need hardly to be dilated upon in this brief paper. The reforms recommended earlier will create the basic conditions essential for these programmes. The rest is a challenge to the academic community which has to plan detailed and comprehensive programmes and implement them in a sustained and vigorous manner on a nation-wide basis.

One important point raised by Shri G.D.Parikh deserves notice. He has pleaded for a large-scale attempt to vocationalise the content of the first degree courses. The lure of the university degree being what it is, he feels that programmes of vocationalisation of secondary education will remain weak and cannot provide the only answer. He therefore suggests that we might introduce a large vocational element in the first degree courses as a supplemental or continuation programme so that the two, taken together, may effectively reduce the pressures on access to universities.\* This idea with a tremendous potential has not received the attention it deserves and it must really be placed in the forefront of all programmes for improving the content of education for the first degree.

\* The Gurunath Rao Ogle Memorial Lecture, 1966.

#### TEACHER PREPARATION AND SPECIAL STUDENT AID

Two ancillary programmes will have to be developed side by side. The first is an intensive and large-scale programme of teacher preparation. The need for this is extremely urgent so that the UGC programmes of summer institutes will have to be stepped up considerably. The second is, special programmes of student aid (other than scholarships or fee grants), especially the organisation of adequate text-book libraries in all colleges and university departments. The programmes of guidance, health services, games and sports and national service will also have to be stepped up. State grants should be available to colleges for these programmes.

#### SOME ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION

The basic issue in Indian education has been that we are committed to three fundamental values which are good in themselves, viz., equality—social justice, quantity and quality. But as we have to pursue them simultaneously in a situation of scarcity, certain basic contradictions arise. These become extremely pointed in higher education. We have not applied ourselves intensively to think this problem through and to devise ways and means which will enable us to reconcile the conflicting demands of equality, quantity and quality and to evolve a harmonious programme that will be in the national interest and implementable with such additional resources as are likely to be available. It is this concern that has compelled me to put forward this ten-point plan of reconstruction as a basis for discussion. I have not claimed either omniscience or infallibility.

Before concluding, I would emphasize the following:

- 1) The problems of access to higher education, structural arrangements, and qualitative improvement are closely linked and the last of these cannot be solved unless satisfactory solutions are found to the first two.
- 2) The solutions to the first two are essentially political. The academic community has an initial responsibility in the sense that it must evolve a plan of action which has the consensus of the community in support. But the decisions

are political and will have to be taken at the highest level. Perhaps nothing less than a conference of Chief and Education Ministers convened by the Prime Minister will help.

- 3) While reform of higher education will have to proceed separately in each State and each university in a manner best suited to local conditions, no action at micro-level is possible unless the basic decisions are taken at the national level; and in this, the Centre has a direct responsibility and positive role because the Constitution has made "coordination and maintenance of standards in higher education" a Central subject.

#### COMMENTS

##### 1) J. Misquitta\*

Shri J.P. Naik in his well thought-out and lucidly presented paper sums up the existing situation in higher education in two basic points: limited resources and our commitment to a policy of open door access to higher education. To increase the investment in education is impossible. To make admissions selective in keeping with the resources and employment opportunities available and the maintenance of proper standards is "found to be totally unacceptable, socially and politically". The programme of action proposed by him reconciles itself to the continuance of these limitations, but seeks to make a breakthrough in spite of them, thus eliminating their objectionable consequences, improving standards and introducing a much greater element of social justice. I attempt to comment on four issues raised by Shri Naik.

- a) *The Distinction between the Selective and Non-selective Sectors.* Such a distinction seems to be called for by our commitment to a policy of open-door access to higher education. Shri Naik would want the selective factor to be strengthened and expanded. One form of expansion is to identify institutions, apparently in the non-selective sector,

---

\* Principal, St. Xavier's College, Bombay

which have a potential for healthy growth and which would be helped to raise their standards so that they find a place in the selective sector. In the non-selective sector certain minimum standards are to be maintained and rigorously enforced and the numbers admitted are to be limited according to the facilities available. If this is implemented then institutions from the non-selective sector would slowly turn selective. What would then become of our open-door policy which demands the maintenance of a non-selective sector? The only form of higher education that may be left to justify this policy would be the correspondence courses. Even in these it may be advisable to insist on maintenance of minimum standards and limitation of numbers according to facilities available.

- b) *Fee Grants:* The new system of grant-in-aid proposed by Shri Naik would create more problems than it attempts to solve. If the colleges have to maintain themselves by charging fees, they will have to be raised by approximately 50 per cent. It will also necessitate a periodic increase to keep pace with salary increments and rising costs. Will there be uniformity in fees enforced on colleges of the same city; region or university? If not, would it not lead to odious competition? If there is such a uniform fee enforced, it will have to be very carefully worked out and periodically revised so that it is sufficient for every college to maintain itself.

The fee grants are to be made to students in a college on the principles of merit-cum-means and social justice. Who is to apply these principles and make the selection of students deserving fee grants and decide on the quantum of grant to each student? Obviously, the college itself would be burdened with the difficult task of evaluating merit and means. There is no problem of evaluating merit from the academic performance of students who continue in the same college. But what about those joining the college from schools? This problem is discussed below. The assessment of means would involve the submission and scrutiny of application forms and certificates of income

(can all sources of income be certified?), interview of students and even visit to their homes. The same problem does exist now but on a much smaller scale. But the higher the fees the larger will be the number of students seeking fee grants. The colleges will not be inclined to make a satisfactory job of the assessment of means or merit since they will not foot the bill for fee grants. Thus the evil which the new system seeks to remedy may still persist and the "haves" who would know how to play about with income certificates would continue drawing on the public exchequer for the education of their children.

The present grant-in-aid system, of its very nature, involves a check by the government on the spending of the colleges. This is good and even necessary provided it is done by officials with sound ideas of education and not by mere bureaucrats. Such a check may not be possible in the new system.

- c) *Social Justice and the Individual's Right to Higher Education.* These are concepts basic to any reorganisation. Shri. Naik frames his suggestions within the limitations of public funds and of making available some form of higher education to every person who desires to go in for higher education. The second limitation obliges him to allow the non-selective sector to exist where admission will not be refused to anyone who desires it. On the other hand admissions to the selective sector are to be made in accordance with social justice which is also relevant to both sectors in assessing students for fee grants.

While fully conceding the individual's right to education I would question the claim to a right to higher education. It is pointless to enter here into a discussion of these rights. It needs to clear ideas of the objectives and functions of education and higher education and of where education, simply so called, ends and higher education begins. Collegiate education may not really be higher education in this sense but may be called thus "by courtesy".

Social justice on the other hand demands that everyone is given the opportunity of receiving an education that would

enable him to be of use to society according to his talents and capacity. Two basic assumptions underlie this demand, viz., nobody is inherently good for nothing and society somewhere and somehow can put his talents to good use. The implications are that aptitudes of individuals should be discovered and avenues opened up for the useful employment of these aptitudes. One cannot divorce education, which is understood as discovery and development of talent, from the effort to make available opportunities for its full employment. In an essay on education, however, we can only discuss the former. Shri Naik pleads for "a large and efficient programme of educational guidance so that the young are helped to make a proper selection" of the type of higher education suited to their aptitudes. But I find irksome the obligation in the so-called non-selective sector not to refuse admission to anyone who desires it. What if he does not have the aptitude for higher education? Refusal in a place where he does not fit in would oblige him to go where he does, provided, of course, this latter place also subscribes to the principles of social justice and admits him because he is fit for the place. If it is a selective sector, it will admit him in preference to others who are not fit.

That brings us to the problem of evolving appropriate methods of selection based on social justice. Indications of innate ability can come from one or more of the following sources: a previous record, a single examination, test or interview, psychological tests and lastly testimonials. Beginning with the last, the value of testimonials cannot be accurately assessed, psychological tests need to be standardised for Indian conditions and students and examination need to be thoroughly reformed before they could serve as reliable criteria of merit. But a beginning towards evolving a trustworthy source of information is the school or college record. Institutions should be encouraged to develop their own accurate and objective methods of evaluation apart from the public or university examinations. The record thus accumulated over the whole period spent in the institution would then be incorporated



into a certificate together with indices for guidance in objective evaluation of the record by an outsider.

- d) *The Separation of Collegiate from University Education.* How far is it healthy to separate colleges from universities? The answer to this question should be based on the functions and goals of collegiate and postgraduate education and should not be the result, as Shri Naik would want it, of mere expansion. There is an alternative solution to mere expansion: to divide the large universities and make smaller homogeneous units. I am not convinced that the taking away of the secondary school examination from the university has been the solution. I am even less convinced of the advisability of separating colleges from the university. Research, postgraduate work and university departments can be a tremendous force in maintaining and raising standards in the colleges.

## 2) C.T. Kurian\*

In his lucidly written paper Shri Naik takes the principle of "selectivity and autonomy"—which formed the basis of the Education Commission's Report—a step further by spelling it out in more operational terms. The principle itself has been much debated in the years since the publication of the Report and the paper examines in some detail one of the issues that has emerged in the discussion—whether selectivity is compatible with our commitment to equality and social justice. Shri Naik points out that while conceptually the problem is reconciling selectivity and equality, in practice the challenge is to combine selectivity with open-door access to higher education which now prevails in the country. With our limited resources, can we give a good education to some who have the competence and some form of higher education to all who desire it? This is the real question. Yes we can, says Shri Naik, because this is precisely what we are doing today: we have the selective and the non-selective sectors in our system of higher education although they are not sufficiently differentiated by bifurcating the existing dual system. "We have

lived and continue to live with selective admissions", he says. "Over the years we have evolved our own particular formula to reconcile the conflicting claims of quantity and quality. That is to say, we have created a dual system in which there is a core of good, worthwhile and useful higher education (to which admissions are made on a selective basis), surrounded by a large and increasing periphery of undergraduate colleges... which are of poor quality and to which access is provided to all who seek it."

The implicit dualism of our system of higher education cannot be denied, but whether it can form the basis of the kind of bifurcation that Shri Naik is proposing will depend on the nature of that dualism. We have two kinds of dualism in our system. The first is based on a vertical differentiation with the professional colleges and research centres as the top selective layer and the usual undergraduate colleges as the diluted lower layer. But do the selective admissions to professional courses and even to science courses in undergraduate colleges constitute an evidence of the willingness to accept the principle of selectivity that Shri Naik is discussing? The principle of selection now operates in the multi-layer system of higher education where the gradations are also widely accepted. For instance, the IITs get the highest score in engineering education, followed by the usual engineering colleges. Students, who do not get into either of these, then try for the science courses in the undergraduate colleges and then the arts and humanities courses in that order. Selective admissions are tolerated here because the differentiation of the product is clear. There is general recognition that the IIT engineering degree is different from the ordinary BE. Similarly a BE is visibly different from a BSc, and the BSc from the BA. It is generally believed too that merit—however defined and identified plays a part in deciding whether a student secures admission to an IIT, an ordinary engineering college, a science course or a course in arts and humanities.

The second kind of dualism is the one with a horizontal differentiation where a distinction based on quality is attempted to be brought about. This is where the problem arises. Can we select a few universities among the many we have and attempt to improve their quality identifying them as superior to others?

---

\*Professor of Economics, Madras Christian College, Tambaram.

Can the BSc course be divided into two, one for the competent students and the other for the rest? Can undergraduate colleges be grouped into a few selected one which aim at excellence and the many which simply serve as "cattle pounds" (to use Shri Naik's very realistic expression)? It is in these cases of horizontal dualism where the product is not easily differentiated that the selective principle will be put to the test. And the evidence we have shows that our system will not take kindly to that sort of selectivity. Why was the Education Commission's strong recommendation for the establishment of "major universities" rejected by the universities themselves? And why has the suggestion to start autonomous colleges been kept in cold storage?

My contention is that while we do tolerate selective admissions on the basis of visible differentiation in the courses, we do not tolerate differentiation based on the consideration of "quality" alone. And I am afraid Shri Naik does not sufficiently appreciate this distinction. It may be that the vast majority of those who seek admission to colleges wish to use them as temporary cattle sheds, but they would resent any suggestion that they are fit to go only to second-rate cattle pounds! Judging from the experience of the past the resistance may come more vehemently from those who run cattle pounds and would not want anybody else to sit in judgement over the quality of their cattle pounds! The fact that in the pattern as we have it today a few institutions of higher education are of a higher quality than the rest and that admission to them is on a selective basis does not suggest that a bifurcation along those line will be tolerated. The present pattern is tolerated precisely because the qualitative differences which exist are not made explicit; the system permits those who wish to run cattle pounds and those who wish to bid time in them to do it in the name of higher education.

I am not suggesting that there is no way out of this situation. We can bifurcate our higher education (and it has to be done too) provided three major conditions are satisfied. The first is that the bifurcation should not be based explicitly on considerations of "quality". It must be based on a clear differentiation of the product, academic and vocational, for instance. Such a differentiation may, and I think will, improve the quality in both the sectors. Secondly, if admissions are going to be selective in one

of them, it must be possible for anybody with the necessary talents and aptitudes to get into it. If financial consideration were the only problem here it could easily be overcome by a system of merit-cum-need scholarships along the lines suggested by Shri Naik. But a selective admissions policy will also have to examine how merit is to be recognised especially because it is generally admitted that examination results are a misleading indicator of the potentials of students. What would be required is a radical alteration of the school system and curriculum which enables the pupils to develop their potentials and to identify their interests and inclinations. Vocationalisation of one sector of higher education also calls for major changes in the school curriculum. Two of the conditions necessary for the bifurcation of higher education are thus seen to be related to changes in the school programme.

The third condition to be satisfied relates to the prospects after the period of higher education. If those who come out of the selective sector get the good jobs and the fat salaries, while those who go through the non-selective sector continue to face unemployment and low levels of earnings, the bifurcation will only confirm the association between quality and privilege. Thus the success of the bifurcation policy will also depend on changes in recruitment policies, both in the public and private sectors, and remuneration patterns.

Because of these far-reaching implications, I do not believe Shri Naik's suggestions for the reorganisation of higher education will get translated into action immediately, although they will certainly be "accepted in principle". But two of Shri Naik's proposals can be taken up immediately and used as preparations for a long-term bifurcation of higher education. These are the delinking of collegiate education from university education by establishing Boards of Collegiate Education and the starting of the programme of autonomous colleges. The delinking of collegiate education from university education can be the first step towards the diversification of our higher education: freed from the "academic" preoccupations of university bodies, the board may be able to achieve some degree of vocationalisation of the first degree course in cooperation with the secondary schools. At the same time the autonomous colleges will have the freedom to

experiment with new curricula and evaluation methods which will result in the strengthening of academic quality at the level of the first degree. The autonomous college which in the Education Commission's Report is envisaged to be operated within the existing system, can also be used as a means to test the extent to which the selectivity principle will in fact be tolerated.

---

 12
 

---

## The Idea of an Autonomous College (1973)\*

---

### THE BACKGROUND

"We should like to refer to the question of 'autonomous' colleges which has been under discussion for many years. Where there is an outstanding college ( or a small cluster of very good colleges) within a large university which has shown the capacity to improve itself markedly, consideration should be given to granting it an autonomous status. This would involve the power to frame its own rules of admissions, to prescribe its courses of study, to conduct examinations and so on. The parent university's role will be one of general supervision and the actual conferment of the degree. The privilege cannot be conferred once and for all—it will have to be continually earned and deserved—and it should be open to the university, after careful scrutiny of the position, to revoke the autonomous status if the college at any stage begins to deteriorate in its standards. We recommend that provision for the recognition of such autonomous colleges be made in the constitution of the universities. It should be possible, in our opinion, by the end of the fourth five year plan, to bring at least fifty of the best colleges under this category. "(Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; page 286).

- (b) The programme of autonomous colleges should be implemented vigorously and an attempt made to set up a fairly large number of autonomous colleges in all parts of the country. By the end of the Fifth Year Plan, at least 5 per cent of the colleges should be made autonomous." (Report

---

\*J.P.Naik, Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, A.B. Shah, M.A. Thangaraj, G.S. Mansukhani, *New Frontiers in Education* (Proc. of 34<sup>th</sup> session), Oct. 11-12, 1968.

of the 36th Session of the Central Advisory Board on Education; September, 1972).

1. Why have these proposals been ignored? Do you think the time is now ripe for their implementation? Are there any obstacles in the way?
2. What should be the criteria for selecting colleges for autonomous status?
3. How do you visualise the administrative and academic operation of an autonomous college vis-à-vis: (i) the parent university, (ii) the State Government, and (iii) the UGC?
4. What should be the administrative structure of an autonomous college? What procedures do you suggest regarding the admission of students, appointment of staff, preparation of curriculum, conduct of examinations and maintenance/improvement of standards in an autonomous college?
5. What do you think will be the reaction of the students, the teaching community and the general public to the selection of a few colleges for autonomous status?
6. Do you think the conferment of autonomy on a few selected colleges will create an elite group of institutions to the detriment of the vast majority of other colleges?

#### RESPONSES

##### J.P. Naik\*

The recommendation of the Education Commission for the creation of autonomous colleges has received considerable attention. Although no college has been made autonomous so far, I find that there is a growing academic opinion in favour of this innovation. I particularly welcome the recommendation of the Central Advisory Board of Education that the programme of autonomous colleges should be vigorously implemented and that at least 5 per cent of the colleges should be made autonomous by the end of fifth Five Year Plan.

I would strongly urge that the University Grants Commission should set up a Standing Committee on autonomous colleges. It

---

\*Adviser, Ministry of Education, Government of India

should include some leading educationists, some Vice-chancellors and some representatives of the Central and State Governments. It should be the responsibility of this Committee to persuade the Central and State Governments and the universities to adopt this recommendation. It should lay down criteria for selection of existing colleges for the autonomous status and suggest the broad guidelines for their administration and financial support. The actual selection should be made by the Visiting Committee which should be jointly appointed by the standing Committee on autonomous colleges, and the University and the State Government concerned. This would ensure uniformity of criteria to be adopted on a national basis and would ensure confidence in the fairness and objectivity of selection. I would also suggest that the University Grants Commission should earmark a certain financial allocation for this programme.

In my opinion, the development of the programme has now reached a crucial stage; and further advance will not be possible unless there is a special machinery to promote it and some financial allocation earmarked for the purpose. This is precisely what should be done now. The year 1973-74 should be devoted to preparatory work and the programme should be launched with effect from the fifth Five Year Plan.

##### Malcolm S. Adiseshiah\*

*The Need for Courage:* Autonomous colleges are badly needed. Everybody is in favour of them. And yet they have been non-starters because every one, including the colleges, is afraid of disturbing the dismal but demanding status quo. I know a number of colleges who have refused the offer of autonomy because in these days of academic anarchy, they are afraid to take on the responsibilities of selecting students and staff, constructing curricula and using the technology and evaluation system of all true educational systems. It is much easier to shelter behind the existing Vice-Chancellor, the syndicate and the Board of Studies. And so I start with a plea to the colleges for courage and confidence in the academic virtues of integrity and objectivity and the social demands of fitness and relevance for which the values of autonomy are available to them.

---

\* Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Madras.

*Criteria:* The criteria for developing autonomous colleges are essentially qualitative. There are also quantitative co-efficients that are used in regard to the number of universities and university colleges that a country should have. In Europe and North America generally these work out to one institution of higher learning for every one million of the population, but it should be noted that these coefficients are *post hoc* exercise. That is, they are calculated on the basis of a long historical process in which the qualitative requirements of fitness and relevance determine both the number of universities and their programme content. For our country too, the criteria for selecting autonomous colleges should be the relevance of the learning offered to the economic, political and moral demands of society and the fitness of the institution to discharge this obligation. Our learning requirements are glaringly obvious. 220 million men, women and children are waiting to be lifted out of poverty: 80 per cent of our farmers who are small farmers, dry farmers and marginal farmers need to be brought into the circle of the new technology: industry—large and medium—which is performing at 50-60 per cent of capacity needs to be brought to production at full capacity; backward classes and areas are waiting for the infrastructure and for small and medium industrial development; 70 per cent of our adults are waiting for the light of knowledge and more than that number have not health services of any kind. And so one could go on portraying the gap between the programme of our higher educational institution and the needs of our society. I see the system of autonomous colleges essentially as a means of restoring to our universities the qualities of fitness and relevance that they have lost. The criterion for choosing them are self evident. There are a dozen colleges in each State which choose themselves for this task.

*Methods:* The methods by which autonomous colleges can realise their basic purpose is through using the autonomy in selection of staff and students, constructing relevant curricula, employing an appropriate technology of teaching and learning and switching over to a system of evaluation which will measure attainments and achievements and not memory and lack of aptitudes.

*Selection:* The first task of an autonomous college should be to decide on its special vocation. At the moment, our colleges are all things to all men and they have become that as a result of

unplanned competition between the institutions, pressure from the public and financial necessities. The result is that every college has a growing and seemingly limitless liberal arts section and a very close second in its science and commerce departments. As staff and library and laboratory facilities cannot be expanded to the same extent, there is on the one hand a fall in standards of teaching and learning and on the other the turning out of graduates not wanted by society. Against this background, each college should first decide what its specific task is, what area of national need, of the state priorities or even the demand of the district or block in which it is situated, it will attempt to meet. For this purpose it must prepare to break away from the beaten track—the PUC, the Intermediate course the BA, BSc, MA, MSc and take a good look around its neighbourhood to decide what specific education and training it is required to provide and what employment prospects there are for its trainees. On this basis it should select the students who have the interest and aptitude for the course that it offers. An autonomous college cannot and should not use the high school diploma—the SSLC or Matric as the admission certificate. It must devise its own admission tests and standards and enrol two types of students—those who are full-time students in the college and those who are at work and who wish to acquire the further skill that the college offers, as an out-of-college student. The same considerations of selectivity apply to the staff of the autonomous college. Both in terms of the specific subject matter specialisations referred to here and in terms of the technology of teaching and learning to be referred to later, the autonomous college must select its staff from among those who have these qualities or who can be helped to acquire these qualities through a staff improvement programme which should be run by it or by a consortia of autonomous colleges continuously every year. Here again the autonomous colleges should in selecting its staff provide for both a constant interchange of teachers from the world of education to the world of work and the use of the many para-educational personnel—civil servants, accountants, managers, farm cooperative personnel who are anxious to teach and so introduce the element of fitness and relevance which is the *raison d'être* of autonomous colleges.

*Curricula:* On this basis, the autonomous college should construct its curricula. The principles of curriculum construction are well known and it is only necessary to emphasise certain of

their aspect here, The whole point of an autonomous college is to ensure that the institution can break away from the deadweight of the traditional curriculum and the complex and time-consuming procedures surrounding the elaboration or of the syllabus modifications. The autonomous college must make its own curricula, using on the one hand all the results of the research breakthroughs from all over the world—in brain research, in ergonomics in behaviourism, in psycho-pedagogy etc. and centred, on the other, on the local problems that the college has decided to specialise in this type of curriculum—creation will involve the development of multiple electives within the chosen area of specialisation. The earlier critique about our colleges being all things to all men does not mean that the autonomous colleges being all things to all men does not mean that the autonomous college will have a single or a limited programme of study. In fact, it is part of a relevant curricula that it offers the trainee a multiple choice of electives as between which he can choose. The multiplicity stems from the multiplicity of the real problems in life. The usual argument against this multiplicity of electives is that it will increase enormously the teaching force of the college and the teaching costs of the system. The costs, however, depend on the technology employed and to that the next section will be devoted. Finally the curriculum of the autonomous college will be a rolling curriculum with no finality about it at any point of time. In a world where the explosion of knowledge, makes today's certainties tomorrow's antiquities, the curriculum must have built into it not only the capacity for self-renewal but also for change and new developments. On the one hand the existing syllabus can and should be constantly reviewed and changed and on the other some electives should be dropped and other completely new ones introduced. The multiplicity of electives should make this possible. This construction of a multifaceted self-renewing curriculum should be the task of the staff and in some cases the students also. If the staff were liberated from the dreary tasks of magistral instruction and unproductive and routine valuing of answer papers, they can keep in touch with all the research developments and help to apply them to the problems of the area that the college is specialising in.

*Technology:* The autonomous college should also pioneer in the technologies of teaching and learning. If the end-product of the technology is not acquisition of a sum of knowledge which

soon gets out of date or of information which is quickly superseded, but learning how to learn. Certain negative and positive consequences follow. Negatively there will be growingly less reliance on the lecture method and on the instruction technique, Positively there will be increasing use of the methods of self-instruction, group discussion and self-study, using the library, the laboratory, the workshop, the firm, the factory and the farm. The media of learning will not only be the book and the printed word but radio and where available direct wire television. This technology of learning is graded, enabling each learner to follow his own time path and special aptitude in the learning process. It is up-to-date in that knowledge and information is acquired as and when required and not for irrelevant purposes such as to show off in an examination system. It is economical because it does not require a vast army of teachers, as in the autonomous college following this technology of teaching and learning, all are teachers and all are learners. The teacher will be learning from the student and the student will be questioning and teaching the teacher. The autonomous college is thus an attempt to return to the original concept of the university, the universitas—the unity of knowledge on which a community of scholars base their contract with each other and life.

*Evaluation:* The most urgent reform needed today to our colleges and universities is the replacement of the quite useless, outdate and harmful system of examinations by a system of internal assessment. The breakdown of the examination system is now near completion. About 70 per cent of the strikes and processions and violence in colleges occurred last year about one month before the examination. 60 per cent of the examinations during the 1972 examination season had to be cancelled, postpone or held under officially approved mass cheating conditions. And the examinations themselves serve no known purpose. They do not test a person's inherent qualities, or his attainments. It tells him what he is not good at and testifies to his capacity to assimilate out-dated information. The autonomous college can now switch over its academic work to the semester or trimester system, dividing up its multi-faceted curricula into such homogeneous work and learning systems and assess the progress and attainments of its students both through techniques of self-evaluation as well as assessment by the teachers. Under such conditions the dangers of *ad hoc* arbitrary personal judgments

disappear because each college is a unit and does not need, for its educational attainments, to compete with and compare with other institutions, except in so far as all are colleges conforming to general criteria and norms established for all colleges and universities. This also means that college certificates should not be misused by employers—public or private—as employment qualifications. Like admissions to colleges, employers should devise their own tests to judge the employability of applicants. College certificates will be evidence of the total rounded learning achievement of each scholar.

#### A.B. Shah\*

- 1) The Education Commission's proposal in connection with autonomous colleges has so far been ignored by, as far as I know, all the universities in India for the same reason that every bureaucrat or minister ignores any proposal for genuine decentralisation of power. Indian universities were conceived in sin and grew up as instruments of foreign government, which was understandably suspicious of the freedom. Unlike, therefore, universities in England, they developed essentially as departments of the Government. Those who ran the universities were also products of the same bureaucratic culture and they did not feel uncomfortable in working without genuine autonomy. The tradition of subservience to superiors and arrogance and arbitrary power in relation to subordinates was continued without any perceptible change even after India became free. Independence merely put a gloss over the subjection of the university.

There can be no question of the time being now right for implementing the proposals of the Education Commission. It is never too early to give autonomy to educational institutions, particularly those which work at the university level. I can see no obstacles in implementing these proposals except, of course the human factor, in the sense that neither university administrators nor college principals and managements desire genuine autonomy. There are, no doubt, (and managements desire genuine autonomy. There are, no doubt,) a few exceptions but the

majority of those who talk of university autonomy and autonomous colleges are really afraid of becoming free.

- 2) If the autonomous status is to be confined to a few select colleges. I would suggest that the criteria for selecting such colleges include the following:

- a) reputation for academic and administrative integrity of the college management and, in particular, the Principal;
- b) academic quality of faculty members;
- c) condition of the library, laboratories and extra-curricular facilities offered by the college;
- d) willingness and capacity to experiment in education as indicated by past record or present work.

I am aware that most of these criteria cannot be applied with any degree of quantitative precision. However, in any given case it should not be difficult to apply them so as to arrive at a clear decision. But much will depend on those who apply the criteria.

I would suggest that the question whether a particular college should or should not have autonomous status should be decided on the recommendation of an independent accreditation committee. Such a committee may have on it a representative of the university but I would suggest that a majority of its members should be persons who have nothing to do with any authority of the university. Otherwise, in most universities, including even some in metropolitan centres, local politics rather than academic criteria is likely to decide the issue.

- 3) (i) I would like an autonomous college to have complete freedom vis-a-vis the university in so far as laying down curricula, methods of teaching and conduct of examinations are concerned. The university should of course exercise supervisory functions in order to ensure that the college maintains at least as high a standard as other colleges in the university and that teachers and students get a fair deal. Apart from this, I would not have the university interfere in the working of the college.
- ii) I do not see how the State Government comes in the picture except for purposes of grant-in-aid. I am opposed to

\* Editor, *Quest*, Bombay.

autonomous colleges getting higher grants than other colleges an account of the fact that they are autonomous colleges is bound to ensure that there will be an academic 'gold rush' which would defeat the purpose of the proposed reform.

However, autonomous colleges should have full freedom of charge whatever fees they consider necessary to maintain and further improve their efficiency. Only, government should see to it that no talented student is prevented from joining such a college on account of the high fees it charges. This can be ensured by instituting system of scholarships, which should be large enough to cover not only the tuition expenses but also the living cost of the student during first years at college. The amounts so advanced can be recovered in compulsory instalments from the students income when he settles down in gainful employment.

- iii) I have always felt that the role of the University Grants Commission ought to have been confined to promoting education experimentation and innovation instead of subsidising teachers' salaries and the like. The UGC can perform this role by making special grants to autonomous as well as other college for specific projects of experimentation and innovation,
- 4) Any college, and an autonomous college in particular, should have a collegiate structure. While the Principal should have the power to take final decisions, it should be possible for all members of the faculty to participate in its day-to-day administration and should have the authority and powers necessary for the purpose. It should also be possible to mark out certain spheres of activity, such as sports, hostel administration, award of free-studentships and scholarships in which students have the final say within the framework rules and norms laid down by the college.

The management of the college, while retaining to itself emergency powers, should normally not be allowed to interfere in its day-to-day work. The dignity of the office of Principal should be ensured if college administration is to be a creative function. If the Principal is not capable of

exercising freedom with responsibility and of offering academic leadership to his colleagues and students. The best thing that the management can do is to replace him by someone who meets these conditions. However, so long as he is there he must be treated as supreme in his own domain.

Regarding the admission of students, not only to autonomous colleges but even to others, it should be possible to give them an aptitude test instead of relying on examination record alone. It should also be possible to make an allowance for students who come from economically or culturally backward families, and to offer them remedial training so that the gap between them and their classmates from advanced families in the matter of communication skills and self-confidence is bridged by the time they complete the first year in college.

As to the appointment of staff, preparation of curricula conduct of examinations and the maintenance/improvement of standards in autonomous colleges, enough has already been said by others to justify wasting space on it here. For instance, about examinations please see H.J. Taylor's article in *Higher Education of India* edited by me.

- 5) I would not know and, frankly, I would not care, provided university authorities and the governments know their mind and have the courage to stand by their decisions,
- 6) No, I do not think that the confinement of autonomy to a few selected colleges will create an elite group of institutions to the detriment of the vast majority of other colleges. Higher education in India, like almost everything else, has been in a state of stagnation for the simple reason that we are a conformist nation which is jealous of excellence in others. We justify this jealousy in the name of equality but deep down we are aware that all our talk of equality is mere eyewash.

Besides, the emergence of a few autonomous colleges-the CABE visualises only 5 per cent of the colleges as autonomous by 1979-80 with their freedom to experiment and innovate should act as an incentive to other colleges to qualify for the status. In any case, the standards of



university education are so low in India that we should not hesitate to incur the wrath of the mediocre in order to raise to international standards the level of at least some colleges and universities in the interest of the country's survival with self-respect in the modern world.

#### M. A. Thangaraj\*

- 1) The *idea* of autonomous college is a sound one, and has been readily accepted by educationists all over India. If higher education is to be relevant to the needs of our developing country, the institutions of higher learning which have the ability should also have the freedom to experiment and innovate in all spheres of educational activity- admissions, courses of study, teaching and learning methods, evaluation procedures, etc. This is possible only if the rigid, straitjacket pattern of the affiliating university is relaxed, and at least some of the better colleges in each university are given autonomous status. This has been recognised by most educationists in the country including Vice-Chancellors and members of the university senates and syndicates. But very little has been done so far about the proposal of autonomous colleges, made by the Kothari Commission in 1965, because of several reasons. Chief among them are two "fears" viz., (i) the fear that if some colleges are selected for autonomous status, others might resent it; and (ii) the fear that if the best colleges are selected for autonomous status, the university would be left only with the mediocre colleges affiliated to it. Other reasons for inaction are: no one was clear as to who should initiate action in this regard and how it was to be initiated and the affiliated colleges themselves did not give much thought to the problem of autonomy, e.g., what exactly they could do under autonomy which they could not do now, what are the implications of autonomy in terms of courses offered, workload, staffing and financial requirements, staff and student response, and so on.

However, that fact the higher education in India has reached a blind alley is becoming more and more obvious

to many educationists, including professors and principals of colleges, and the urgency of the need for a drastic reform in education has also been recognised by them. Here and there, Principals and Professors have even got together for long period and have discussed at depth what autonomy would mean to them and how they should prepare themselves for it. I do think that the time is ripe for the implementation of the recommendations of the Kothari Commission on autonomous colleges. Some universities might place obstacle on the path; but I do not think it would be serious or universal. The unpreparedness of the colleges themselves would be a more serious problem. Hence it would be a good idea to inform the selected colleges early about their selection and ask them to workout and submit details of how they propose to function under an autonomous status.

- 2) The selection of colleges for the autonomous status is going to be a tricky problem, whichever way we look at it. However, some general guidelines may be indicated. Among the qualities one would look for in an autonomous college, I would put *its ability to think and to experiment and innovate at the top*. Even in the present rigid set-up, colleges do have a certain amount of freedom to experiment in teaching and examining methods. A college which has already shown its ability to think and plan corporately (with its faculty, administration and students doing the thinking and planning jointly) and to try out new experiments in teaching and examining, would, in my opinion, qualify for selection as an autonomous college. The intellectual attainments of the faculty should be quite high, for they play a key role in making the autonomous college really autonomous. I would also look for a smooth and harmonious relationship between the administration, faculty and student body: for, this new status would call for drastic changes in outlook and action, and the three elements that go to make up the college community should not pull in different directions. If the college has produced good examination results, I would not hold it against the colleges; but it would not be an important criterion. The college should have adequate facilities, in classrooms laboratory, library, hostels equipment, books etc. and

\*Principal, American College, Madurai

should have built up healthy academic traditions of scholarship and excellence.

- 3) The parent university would still exercise a supervisory role over the autonomous college in order to see that things are going on well there. However, in order to guard against local jealousies, one or two members appointed by the UGC also should be on the review board. The college should have complete freedom in admissions, courses offered, teaching and examining; but the degrees may be conferred by the college itself or by the university. The financial assistance may be given by UGC rather than the State Government, since the latter would tend to treat all the colleges within the borders of the State on the same footing. The financial and staff needs of the autonomous college could be very different from those of other colleges, since the former is trying out new curricula, teaching methods, etc.
- 4) Since the overall responsibility for the smooth running of the college rests with the administration the responsibility to maintain and develop the physical plant as well as excellence in the academic programme, finance and fund-raising, staff and student discipline, liaison with the alumni, parents, public, government and industry, etc., it may be necessary to reorganise the administrative set up of the college. Some new posts may have to be created and hitherto unexploited channels of communication opened up. Serious efforts should be made to involve the staff and the students in educational planning and to generate a new sense of purpose in education.

In addition to the present set-up of Principal, Vice-Principal Bursar (or Treasurer) Senatus (or College Council), Faculty Committee, etc., which obtains in most colleges, new posts like the Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Counselling and Guidance may have to be created new bodies such as the Finance and Property Committee, Student Service Committee, Research and Development Committee, and committees for Admissions, Appointments, Selection of External Examiners and so on may have to be established. The responsibilities of each office and committee should be clearly defined and their

work carefully coordinated so as to ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of the college.

Autonomy should give a college the freedom to select students who are motivated and who will profit themselves and the country by their higher education, the freedom to determine the content of higher education and the standards of attainment; and the freedom to determine the size and rate of growth. In short, it gives the college freedom to become a centre of excellence.

For autonomy to succeed, selection must be made of students who are motivated and will profit by higher education. In order to ensure social justice a certain percentage of seats may be reserved for educationally backward sections of the society, but merit should be the sole criterion for selection. The college must devise a general entrance test to evaluate I.Q. comprehension and expression. Liberal financial aid must be offered to enable bright but poor students to benefit from higher education. The Admissions Committee should be able to withstand pressure from various quarters at the time of admissions. Similar care must be taken in the matter of appointments. The Appointments Committee may consist of the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the Chairman and two other members of the appropriate department.

"Teaching, learning and examining actually constitute a unity of functions". Hence, for a qualitative improvement in education, all these three functions must be improved simultaneously.

Many educationists feel that the semester system of courses is being suited to improve teaching and the students' learning habits. The semester courses must be well defined in both scope and aims. The concerned department should review every course critically and intensively, and arrange to have the synopses of lectures, bibliography and home work among others should be the major criteria for the selection of autonomous colleges.

- 5) It is too early to spell out with clarity the work practices and administrative structure of the autonomous college. Much will depend on the quantum and type of liberty that

the universities and State Governments will be prepared to give them. As far as the UGC is concerned, it will welcome the utmost autonomy within the prevailing Acts which govern the universities. As far as the government colleges are concerned it is primarily a matter between the State Government and the university to decide what administrative arrangements are to be made.

It may be difficult to make any radical change in the administrative structure of institutions since autonomy is conferred on existing colleges. The present Governing Bodies will have to continue for quite some time. The power of the Governing Bodies may have to be limited in course of time, in regard to academic policies and staff appointments.

Admissions should be based purely on merit. I think autonomous colleges will attract gifted students. In appointment of staff not only academic qualities but also other factors such as extracurricular interests, integrity, capacity for independent, creative work, etc., will have to be considered. Perhaps the pay scales may also have to be modified to attract the best staff to the autonomous colleges.

Utmost freedom in experimenting with curricula, especially introduction of work experience, projects and vocational training should be encouraged. The general annual examination may have to be abolished and results based on classwork and continuous assessment during the entire duration of the course.

To ensure the maintenance and improvement of standards a committee appointed by the UGC should annually visit the autonomous colleges. They will have to examine how far their performance justifies the continuance of their autonomous status.

- 6) Any quality-improvement programme will invite some hostility from existing institutions and also from the general public. Institutions selected for such programmes will be subjected to unfair criticism as "bastions of privilege and elitism". But such institutions have a very useful purpose to serve in improving the standards of higher education.

---

## 13

---

### The Janata College\* (A New Concept)

---

#### WHAT IS JANATA COLLEGE?

The average rural school of today can hardly be described as the principal or even a major focus of the life of the village community. In fact, even a casual observation of life in a village will show that the local school is almost completely isolated from its main currents. The average villager does not feel proud about it. He should of course be excused for this attitude because more often than not a village school has nothing of which any person can feel proud. He owes it no allegiance; he has next to no authority to control or supervise its functioning; and it is rare to come across a villager who would describe it as *his* school—the usual expression used being a *Government* school or a *local board* school. Its only clientele are the children only one child in three or four is enrolled in our schools, so that the average village school serves about 5 to 6 per cent of the rural population only who enter it at about the age of six and after staying therein for about 2½ years on an average, leave it at about the age of nine! They learn little during these early years of schooling and the standard of instruction is usually so low that they do not develop any love and loyalty to their sole "Alma Mater". Consequently, one finds a great indifference to the local school even in a village where a substantial part of the adult population can be said to be its "past" students.

Moreover, the poor standard of education, indifferent training, poverty and lack of enthusiasm of the average primary

---

\*Educational Quarterly, Vol. IV, No.4.(7 pages).

teacher generally results in restricting the activities of the rural school to the mechanical and uninspiring teaching of the prescribed curriculum and it does not develop any of those innumerable extracurricular activities which might attract the local adults and promote their intellectual and cultural life. Lastly, the personality of the average village teacher is rarely of the type which would command reverence in the village and make the villagers look up to him as their friend, philosopher and guide. As a result of these and other failures of commission and omission a rural school is not regarded as an important institution of rural life and hardly ever does it become the centre of the community it is meant to serve.

1. He should of course be excused for this attitude because more often than not a village school has nothing of which any person can feel proud.
2. Only one child in three or four is enrolled in our schools, so that the average village school serves about 5 to 6 per cent of the rural population only.

This sad state of affairs is almost universal in our rural areas and its continued existence is mainly due to our failure to visualise the problem of rural education in its proper perspective. It was only when the concept of Social Education developed within the last few years under the auspices of the National Government of a free India that the true place and function of the school in rural life began to be envisaged. The State now ceased to restrict its educational activities to children only and extended them to include all persons young and old in the community. Adult education thus came to have a place similar to that of the education of children. Moreover, adult education was no longer defined as attainment of literacy but was conceived as that total education of the adult which would make him a responsible and good citizen of the Indian Union.

Primary education also was reoriented to the larger objective of developing the whole personality of the child. These broader concepts naturally led to a redefinition of the function of the rural school. It was no longer possible to restrict its activities to the teaching of the three R's to the local children. In view of the new situation and demands it came to be looked upon as the one

educational centre for the total education of the old and the young alike or as the central pivot round which the social, intellectual and cultural life of the village as a whole should move. This view is recent no doubt, but it has already taken deep roots and has come to stay. In fact, it may be described as the most significant ideological contribution of the last five years to the problem of rural education and there is no doubt that the progress of the rural schools of the future will be judged by the extent to which they are able to absorb these ideas and work them out in practice.

The statement of these new objectives raises several problems that need immediate attention. How can we make the village school a community centre? What technique and methods should be adopted to that end? How shall we discover these methods and techniques and where shall we experiment upon them before they can be generally recommended for adoption? In what way should the training of primary teachers be reconditioned so as to prepare them adequately for their new and greater responsibilities? What changes would be needed in the administrative and supervising machinery in order to enable the primary schools to play their new role as efficiently as possible? And so on.

It is obvious that these problems cannot be left to the primary teachers of today for solution they are too ill-equipped intellectually to grapple with them. Nor are there many existing institutions which can be used as laboratories to carry out research and experimentation on them. What the situation needs, therefore is the organisation of a new institution where rational and realistic solutions to these problems can be attempted. Such an institution must be a demonstration and experimental centre in the first instance. That is to say, it should actually try to function as a community centre in a given rural area. But that is not enough. It must also have a research section which would enquire into the philosophical, psychological and sociological bases of each new method or technique proposed to be adopted and which would design experiments to try alternative methods and techniques and to evaluate their results.

Thirdly, it must also have a teaching section where workers would be trained in the new methods and techniques evolved so that the ideological contribution of the experiment is conveyed to a wider area. The new institution that is coming to be known as

the Janata College should try to become such a research, experimental and training institution. While itself functioning as a centre for the community in which it is located, it also tries to discover the several methods of turning the rural school into a community centre and attempts to broadcast them through the training of rural teachers.

### The Janata College as a Community Centre

One important aspect of the functioning of a Janata College is that it serves as the community centre for the area in which it is located. Its success in this practical endeavour is obviously of fundamental importance and upon it depends its value as a training centre for primary teachers and the effectiveness of its research techniques.

There are three fundamental principles which need to be specially emphasized in the organisation of the Janata College as a community centre. The first is the simultaneous conduct of a large variety of activities. A child has a very large range of interests but a small span of attention. He, therefore, likes to indulge in a number of different activities by devoting only a short time to each. As he grows older however he sheds off one activity after another and begins to take a deeper interest only in those few which he likes best or can attempt most successfully. The average adult, therefore is interested in very few activities but his interest in them is deep and lasting. As the object of the community centre is to attract every adult to it, it must arrange to conduct a large variety of activities each of which would appeal to some group in the local community, so that, taken together they would be able to extend the clientele of the Janata college to the maximum extent possible and try to reach every adult in the locality. These activities would naturally vary from place to place but some idea of the manner in which these can be organised is given below.

- 1) *Library and Reading Room:* This is a very important activity and probably the best means of maintaining and developing the intellectual and cultural life of the rural area. It is true that at present the number of persons who read books or newspapers in a rural community is very small ; but things are expected to alter radically with the introduction of compulsory education for children and the

expansion of social education programmes for the liquidation of adult illiteracy . A fair amount of outlay on the conduct of a library and reading-room is therefore justified. If properly organised, this institution would keep alive and develop the reading interests created in childhood help in promoting good citizenship by keeping the adult community well-informed and intellectually alert and would prevent such events as lapse into illiteracy through failure to utilise the literacy skills acquired in primary or adult schools.

- 2) *Games and Sports:* Physical education and recreation attract a much larger clientele today than libraries and reading rooms. It is therefore necessary to lay great stress on them, partly to serve a larger section of the community and partly to promote national fitness and better social intercourse. Provision should therefore be made for indoor as well as outdoor games. Special emphasis has to be laid on group activities and on games that need little or no equipment.
- 3) *Classes for Further Education:* The Janata College must provide for the education of every distinct group in the local adult community. They are :
  - a) *The illiterate adults:* These form the biggest group at present. Social Education classes will have to be organised for them. Both at the literary and post-literary level. Special efforts will have to be made to conduct such classes for women.
  - b) *The semi-educated group:* The adults who attended a primary school in their early years but left it some time in, or before, Std.IV form a distinct group which may be described as that of the "semi educated". Many of them would desire to study further, either with a view to preparing for an examination or for pursuing some of their personal interests further. Adequate provision for satisfying these needs will have to be made.
  - c) *The educated group:-* Many of those persons who have received all the education that the local school can afford (in almost all rural areas, this is at best, equivalent to a seven years course) do desire to study further and to understand things that are happening in

the contemporary world. In order to meet the needs of this group, special courses of lectures and talks will have to be arranged.

- d) *Part-time Instruction of Children:* Owing to economic difficulties, the average village child is withdrawn from school and put on to some form of remunerative work as soon as it reaches the age of nine or ten. Many of these children desire to continue their study further if it is provided on a part-time basis so that they can both earn and learn. Such part-time classes – they may well be described as “Night Primary Schools” – will have to be conducted at the Janata College.
- 4) *Vocational Education:* A large number of adults are interested in improving their efficiency at the vocation they have adopted. In rural areas, this will be mainly agriculture (including live-stock development) or one or the other of the few available subsidiary industries. Provision will therefore have to be made for imparting such vocational education as is likely to be of use to the local community.
- 5) *Citizens Advisory Bureau and Service Centre:* The Janata College must also be equipped to serve as an information and service centre for its local area. When a villager is in difficulty and wants to have information regarding something which interests him or wants some assistance in representing a grievance or obtaining some facility from Government, he is usually at a loss and does not know what to do. It is the duty of the Janata College to help him on such occasions, taking care to see however, that such help does not involve it in a dispute between two local groups or individuals. It will also have to give free service in writing or reading letters, in supplying equipment needed for sick persons. In developing local institutions like the village panchayat and the co-operative society and in solving the day-to-day problems that arise in their administration.
- 6) *Encouragement of Hobbies:* This will be another useful activity which a Janata College can undertake. Not every hobby is costly; and hardly any work can be done on the discovery of hobbies suitable for our rural areas. In fact,

there are several hobbies (bee-keeping, for instance) which can be developed in a rural community and can actually bring in some income to those who practise it. The educational, cultural and social value of hobbies is admittedly so great that it will be a serious mistake for the organisers of a Janata College to neglect this aspect of adult life.

- 7) *Occasional Functions:* The activities described so far are those that will go on throughout the year. In addition to these, many occasional functions and activities also have to be organised in a Janata College.

Among them, the following may be mentioned:

- a) Organisation of annual sports in the village and participation in inter-village sports;
- b) Celebration of famous days like the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, or Lokamanya Tilak, The 15th of August, the 26th of January, etc.;
- c) Celebration of local and general festivals in a suitable manner;
- d) Inviting persons from outside to help in the organisation of college activities;
- e) Arranging dramatics, music concerts, exhibition of physical efficiency feats, etc.;
- f) Organising film shows and radio programmes;
- g) Undertaking projects of community development and social service, and
- h) Organising volunteer corps to assist in local fairs or in crisis like the outbreak of an epidemic, etc.

This discussion need hardly be continued further what has been said already is enough to show how a Janata College can be made to throb with life and activity all-round the year, how it would be possible to cater to some need or interest of almost every adult in the village if a sufficiently varied and comprehensive programme of activities is organised and how the Janata College can be made the hub round which the social, intellectual and cultural life of the village community can revolve smoothly.

An important question which would immediately occur to every one in this connection is; will not the organisation of this multitude of activities require a very large staff and will it not, in consequence, also require a financial outlay which would be beyond the capacity of most villages? It is here that the second fundamental principle of the organisation of a Janata College comes in. It is a condition precedent to the true success of a Janata College that its paid staff should be restricted as much as possible and that most of its activities should be organised through local voluntary workers specially trained for the purpose. In England, the only paid and full-time staff of a community centre is the Warden whose salary is paid by government. The rest of the work is all done by committees elected from the local community and by voluntary workers. This should be the ideal to aim at in India also. A community centre should have a whole-time executive (this would be the Principal when the Community Centre is functioning at a higher level as a Janata College) and although a small temporary staff may be employed to assist him in the initial stages, the aim should be to dispense with it as soon as local voluntary agency has been trained. It should be the main duty of the Principal or Warden to discover local talent, to train it properly and to utilise it for organising the activities of the centre. This is rather a slow process in the beginning but ultimately it is only this policy that can deliver the goods. If we make the organisation of a community centre a costly project which involves a large staff and considerable financial outlay—recurring and non recurring—we would be able to afford only a few of them and these will be run as show places. On the other hand, if we adopt the principle outlined above, the head teacher of every primary school can also be required to function as the Warden of the local community centre (subject to payment of a small allowance on that account) and it would be easily possible for us to make every primary school – however humble a community centre and to provide this amenity of civic life to almost every village.

It may be asked whether it would be possible to obtain all the workers needed for the community centre on a voluntary basis and in every given area. The answer is definitely in the affirmative. Even today, the adult community in every village does organise its own social and cultural life. It arranges

dramatics, music concerts, wrestling matches and such other programmes for public recreation. It celebrates festivals, holidays and fairs. In fact, it already does a surprising number of things which have been suggested above for adoption by the community centre. Unfortunately, all these activities are conducted conventionally and at a level where they lose a good deal of their social, intellectual and cultural values. But the necessary leadership to organise them is already there and, if properly approached and trained, it would easily be able to organise these activities in a way which would make them culturally and educationally useful. Secondly, a great source of potential manpower is the local school. If the school children are properly trained, they would be of immense use in organising the activities of the community centre economically and efficiently. Beside, it would be a great education to the children themselves to be required to work in such projects and it would also help them materially in later life if they are required, in their early formative years, to shoulder specified responsibilities in conducting the day-to-day work of a community centre.

The third fundamental principle in the organisation of a community centre is that the activities to be actually organised in a given place should be carefully selected on the basis of local talent and resources available. There is no need to have every activity in every place and if the selection of activities is done carefully, it would always be possible to provide the largest variety consistent with the availability of personnel and resources. This suggestion does imply that not all community centres would be functioning at the same level and that the centres located in small and backward villages will always be at a handicap. It is, of course, possible to improve the situation to some extent and to attempt to equalise opportunities in some measure by a suitable system of grants-in-aid. But there are wide limits beyond which such an attempt would not go and we will have to accept a certain amount of inequality as the inevitable corollary of the peculiar pattern of our rural life.

#### THE JANATA COLLEGE AS A RESEARCH CENTRE

Every Janata College is necessarily a community centre for the area in which it is located, but every community centre is not a

Janata College. It becomes one only when it develops another aspect, viz., the conduct of research on community centres.

Various important problems in social education face us at present and many of these can be properly solved only on the basis of research and experimentation. Among these, the following may be mentioned:

- a) The curriculum of social education content;
- b) Basic vocabularies of rural adults;
- c) Adult interests and aptitudes in rural areas;
- d) Adult recreation in a rural community;
- e) Leisure-time activities of rural adults – as they are at present and as they should be;
- f) Indigenous forms of adult recreation and their adaptation for modern educational purposes;
- g) Rural hobbies and allied problems; and
- h) Celebrations of holidays and festivals and their educational uses, etc.

A Janata College offers an ideal platform from which research problems of social education can be carried out. An illustration will suffice to clear the point. Let us assume that we want to determine the curriculum in Geography for a class in social education. An expert may be put on to the job. He will first prepare, from general principles, a tentative draft of such a curriculum which will enable the average adult to understand his world and to follow the newspapers intelligently. He will then try to break it up in a number of talks arranged in a series, the aim being to convey all the information required in the smallest number of talks possible. He will also prepare the necessary teaching aids for the purpose. When all these preparations are made he will actually deliver these talks to a group of adults attending the community centre and in the light of experience, and after further trials if necessary, he would finalise the number of talks, the text of each talk and the teaching aids required. This will give us material to define the curriculum in Geography, to prepare a handbook of talking points meant for teachers of social education in the subject, and also to prepare a geography book for the new literates. Research and experimentation on other

problems can also be planned similarly. But it is obvious that unless there are a few community centres where such research is made a basic part of their work, the movement would soon lose itself in the dreary sand of dead habit and the nation would be deprived of the advantages that a vital and well planned programme of social education could bring.

#### THE JANATA COLLEGE AS A TRAINING CENTRE

The third and last aspect of the Janata College is that it serves as a training centre for primary teachers and others in the technique of social education and in the methods of running community centres. This function is extremely vital at present because the conversion of a school into a community centre has been rightly given a high priority in the immediate plans of educational reconstruction. We therefore, need a large number of whole-time trained wardens to conduct community centres in bigger places. What is more, we must educate every teacher, primary or secondary, to manage a community centre. This is all the more necessary for rural teachers because, in small villages the head-teacher in charge of the local school will have to be made the ex-officio Warden of his community centre. It is, therefore, necessary that the Janata College should give a lead in the matter. It should train where resources permit whole-time wardens for big community centres, research workers in adult education, and members of the staff of secondary and primary training colleges for teachers (in so far as the conduct of community centres is concerned). It should also be a general policy now to appoint an additional member on the staff of every primary or secondary training college – he may be designated as the Director of Community Projects and it should be his duty to conduct one or more community centres attached to his college in order to provide the necessary practical experience to the teachers under training. If these steps are taken, the leadership necessary to generalise the movement would soon be available.

#### PLANS OF ORGANISATION

The lead in the matter of Janata College must come from the Government of India. It should conduct one such model centre on an All-India basis where workers from all parts of India can



come for training, comparing notes and refresher courses. Naturally, this Janata College would have to emphasize research as one of its most fundamental objectives. Each State government should also conduct at least one urban and a few rural centres in each linguistic area or in each distinct natural region. As suggested already, community centres should also be organised in every training institution and special director should be placed in their charge. This is also a good field where universities, local bodies and private agencies can play a very significant role and it should be the duty of Central and State Governments to help them with liberal grants-in-aid.

### Finance

In the early years, it is not possible to expect the adult community, especially in rural areas, to pay for the conduct of community centres. For the first five years or so, therefore, almost all the expenses will have to come from Government grants, donations, or such other public funds. But as the movement gathers ground, the adults in the locality who benefit from the community centres will come forward to meet a part of the expenses and ultimately we may reach the stage where, as in England, all expenses of the Centre are met by the local community and only the salary of the Warden is paid by the State.

The Janata College ought to be developed as an indigenous experiment suited to our peculiar needs and conditions. It certainly has very close parallels abroad; the community College of USA; the village or Country Colleges of England; and the Folk High Schools of Denmark. It should borrow freely from these great institutions. But instead of being a mere facile imitation of these foreign models, it should be evolved on our own lines in the light of our own experience, research and experimentation. This is a difficult job no doubt; but the future of our social education programmes will ultimately depend upon the vision and efficiency that we shall bring to bear on the organisation and development of this pioneer institution

Education for Rural Development
---------------------------------

---

## Some Problems of Rural Education (1960)\*

---

### LECTURE I

1. The subject on which I propose to share my thinking with you this evening is 'Some Problems of Rural Education'. I have used the word 'some' deliberately because it would not be possible to cover all the different aspects of this complex problem in the course of a single discussion. I would also like to make it clear that I do not bring any standardised solutions. All that I have been able to do is to understand some of the major problems in this field and it is this understanding that I proposed to place before you. I would be glad if you can suggest some solutions.
2. The aspect of rural education in India as it strikes me is the inadequate provision of schooling facilities at all stages of education. Let us begin with the primary stage where the rural areas are more plentifully provided than at others. According to the educational survey recently carried out, there are about eight lakhs of rural habitations in this country and about three lakhs of them are, even to this day, without even primary schools. There are several parts in the country where there is not a single school even within a radius of 20 to 30 miles. This, believe me, is not due to any lack of awakening in the countryside. When the Education Secretary once paid a visit to the Naga Hills, the tribal people came to him and said that the one thing they wanted to have was a school. All that they asked for was

---

\*Extension Lectures delivered at B.R. College, Agra (Agra Univ.) (Dec 2-4, 1960).

a teacher for whom they were prepared to provide a house and, because of the inaccessibility of their village, they were even prepared to carry him to their place on their shoulders from the nearest road. I am quoting this as an example to show how the people in rural areas have now become hungry for education and even the minimum of the education facilities is very often denied to them.

3. At the secondary stage, the disparity of educational provision in urban and rural areas becomes all the greater. Only twenty per cent of our total population lives in towns and about 50 per cent of our secondary schools are in urban areas only.

In the Educational Survey, two simple standards were laid down to determine the need of educational facilities at the middle and secondary school stages, viz., that there should be a middle school within three miles of the residence of every child and that there should be a secondary school within five miles of the residence of every child. These are not ambitious targets, and yet, it was found that 16,000 additional primary schools and about 10,000 secondary schools would be required to meet the needs of rural areas.

4. At the collegiate stage and in fields like technical education, the disparities of educational provision between urban and rural areas are the highest. The number of colleges and technical institutions of a high level which are situated in rural areas would be less than a hundred and it would be no exaggeration to say that most of these institutions are situated in towns and cities.
5. It will thus be seen that most of our educational institutions today, especially at the secondary and higher stages, have been located in urban areas. This has been the result of a historical development in which education first began in towns and cities and slowly spread towards the villages. In the beginning, all the new schools, even at the primary stage, were situated in towns. Later on, primary schools began to spread out to villages, but secondary schools were mostly confined to urban areas. By about 1921, even secondary schools began to be started in rural areas, but

colleges and other institutions still continued to be urban-centred. It is only during the last ten or fifteen years that institutions of higher education also are being started in rural areas. But the movement is too small in size and too recent in character to be significant. We have thus a contrast between a population which is largely centred in rural areas and an educational system which is mostly centred in urban areas. This is diametrically opposite to our ancient traditions. In the past, the best educational centres were located in sylvan areas, in *Ashrams* of the great *Rishis*, and people from urban areas, even the sons and daughters of the kings, were sent to these sylvan retreats for their education. The people believed that these quiet places with their close contact with Nature were most suited for the proper education of young people than the towns and the cities. We now seem to think the other way and a stream of students from our rural areas continually migrates to urban areas for education and this continues to happen in spite of the fact that we realise the several demoralising influences which exist, and are increasing, in our urban environment.

6. This unhappy situation has two very bad consequences. The first is the privilege which attaches merely to the place of birth. Imagine the different opportunities in life that are open to a child born in Delhi as compared with a tribal child born in the forests of Orissa. It is merely an accident of a place of birth; and yet the child born in Delhi has all educational opportunities in India open to it while the tribal child born in the forest may never even become aware of a primary school. Such inequality of educational opportunities is the very negation of a democratic social order based on justice. We shall, therefore, have to give serious attention to this thought and adopt measures which will at least equalise the educational provision in rural areas with that in urban areas. Personally, I would prefer the provision in rural areas to be greater so that children from urban areas could be sent out, to some extent at least, to rural areas for the prosecution of their studies.

7. So far I have spoken only about the quantitative aspect of the provision of educational facilities. Great as the differences are in this respect, they are greater still from the qualitative point of view and the rural schools, by and large, compare very unfavourably with their counterparts in urban areas. An average primary school in a rural area is inferior to an average primary school in the urban area and the same can be said of secondary schools and collegiate institutions as well. The reasons are obvious. The resources of rural institutions are meager in every way. Their enrolments are small. Where an income from fee is expected, the rural schools get much less income because their rates of fees are lower and the percentage of freeships has to be larger. The grants to rural schools are not proportionately as large. The average teacher who agrees to go and work in a rural area is generally one who has been unable to get a job in an urban area. It is said that only those who do not get any other employment come to the teaching profession. If that is true, the teachers in rural areas will have to be described as the reject of the rejected. The examination results of the rural schools are generally poorer; their buildings and equipment are not satisfactory and on the whole, their level of functioning is much lower. Since the syllabi for urban and rural schools are the same and the only difference between them is one of quality, one may even define a rural school as "an urban school conducted with greater inefficiency".
8. Equality of educational opportunity does not mean only quantitative equality of provision. It also means qualitative equality and, in a democracy, the rural children have a right to expect the same *standard* of education to be provided for them as is provided for the children in urban areas. This aspect of the problem is even more difficult to be tackled. But we shall have to tackle it, sooner or later. We will have to place larger resources at the disposal of rural schools through a properly organised system of grants-in-aid, and measures will have to be taken, through provision of higher scales of pay or allowances or the provision of quarters, to induce the best of our teachers to live and work in rural areas.
9. The second problem of rural education to which I would like to invite your attention refers to objects. What are the objects of rural education? Should rural education be different from urban education and, if so, in what way? These are some of the questions which are most frequently raised; and, as may be easily anticipated, these have become very controversial questions on which strong views are held on both sides. There are some who believe that all education is one; that there should be no distinction between urban and rural education; and that whatever is given for urban areas must also be provided for rural areas. There are others, however, who challenge this viewpoint, and who believe that there is a basic difference between the demands of life in rural areas and those of life in urban areas and that it is essential to develop a system of rural education which is different from that in urban areas in several important respects. Their thesis is that education has to be related to the conditions of life. At the moment, there is a wide gulf in the conditions of life as they exist in rural and urban area. A person who loves to live and work in rural areas, therefore, will have to be trained in a radically different manner from the one who is expected to live and work in an urban area.
10. Probably, the controversy would be understood better if we analyse the objectives of education itself. All educational process, as is well known, can be divided into three groups of activities: (1) imparting of knowledge; (2) teaching of the necessary skills; and (3) the development of the essential aptitudes, interests and values. In so far as the first group of activities is concerned, there need be no difference between urban and rural education. All knowledge is the same, whether taught in urban areas or in rural areas. Ultimately, therefore, the content of education would have to be the same for urban and rural areas, although the curriculum at different stages of education may have to be suitably altered to meet the differing conditions of life. For instance, a rural child may find it difficult to understand electricity, telephone, etc., and it may have to be taught the subjects a little later than an urban child. On the other hand, subjects of nature study

can be taught more easily and earlier to a rural child. Such differences in grading cannot really constitute a major distinction and, insofar as the content of education is concerned, the needs of rural and urban education may be regarded as identical.

11. With regard to the second objective, viz., teaching skills, some differentiation will have to be made because the pattern of occupations in rural and urban areas varies considerably. Certain skills like reading and writing will have to be common both to the urban and rural areas; but certain other skills, particularly vocational skills, will have to be different. A child who is expected to live and work in a rural area will have to be taught agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, smithy or any other trade which it is possible to practise in the rural areas at the present moment or within the next ten to twenty years. The child in urban areas, on the other hand, will have to be taught skills which will make him fit for entering on a vocation normally available in our city life. The differences in this objective of education, therefore, are significant and will have to be taken note of in planning the educational provision in rural areas.
12. These differences become greater still in respect of the third objective, viz., the development of desirable aptitudes, interests and values. A careful study of the social environment in urban and rural areas will show that living in villages is a way of life which is materially different from that of the cities. A temperament which is happy in the crowds, the noise and the stress and hustle of city life will be miserable in the quiet and slow tempo of life in a village. Similarly, a person who loves the hills, the trees and brooks, who desires to remain more by himself than in company or to commune more with Nature than with men, and who loves the peace of the countryside will find himself in a mad house if forced to stay in an urban area. The difference between urban and rural education in this respect, therefore, would be almost fundamental. All things considered, therefore, it does appear that there is need to make some distinction between urban and rural

education. It is unfortunate that the right type of differentiation has not yet been worked out. I hope it will be possible to do so in the near future.

13. It is inevitable that this discussion of the distinction between urban and rural education should get mixed up with the issue of migration from villages to cities which is the third and the last problem I propose to discuss this evening. That there is a large-scale migration from rural to urban areas at present is a matter of fact which every one has to admit. The only two problems that we have to decide are:

- 1) Is this migration desirable?
- 2) If it is not desirable, what can be done to reduce it?

There are some advocates of rural education who believe that the objective of rural education should be to prevent children of rural areas from migrating to towns and they would judge the success of the programme of rural education from the effect it would produce in reducing this migration. They also believe that this migration from rural to urban areas is a very bad social trend of the day and hence they advocate a proper development of rural education as a panacea of great significance to this social ill. There are several others who challenge this viewpoint. They think that this migration from rural to urban areas is not only necessary but even inescapable if the pressure of population on land is to be reduced. They, therefore, argue that one of the objectives of rural education must be to enable a rural student to fit himself for a future career in urban areas. They also feel that the main objective of rural education should be to accelerate the migration from rural to urban areas rather than the reverse.

14. Probably the point at issue would be clear if I place before you two of my very interesting experiences. The first was when I received an application from a small rural secondary school asking for a grant-in-aid to start a course in shorthand and typewriting and in commercial art. I wondered why a school in such remote rural surroundings should ever need to teach these courses. At the same time,

I also received another application where a school in a rural setting asked for permission to discontinue the teaching of the agricultural course which had been given to it about three years earlier. This was an equally surprising situation and as both the schools were not far apart, I paid a personal visit to them. The rural school which had asked for a course in shorthand and typewriting and commercial art, was located in a small village of 5,000 population about 200 miles south of Bombay. The Headmaster believed, and quite rightly, that his one objective should be to pick out brilliant boys from the village and to train them up for a good job in Bombay. His main objective was to provide an escape from the extremely poor and killing environment round him, an environment which had no power to improve, and the results had justified this policy.

During the last 20 years the school had been in existence, some hundreds of its students had been trained for urban careers, had gone out to Bombay and had been earning a decent wage which they would never hoped to get in their own native surroundings. They had also helped the school to collect about Rs. 60,000 for a building. I did not have the heart to say 'no' to him and I believed that, in the circumstances, he was doing the best possible service for the students in whose wellbeing he was really interested. When I went to the other school which had been teaching the agricultural course unsuccessfully for about three years, I found the reverse side of the same situation. The parents were not interested in the agricultural course. Knowing the miserable lot of the average agriculturist, they all wanted their children to escape it and to take to some other vocation, be it that of a clerk, a teacher, or even a peon. They were indignant at the idea that their children should be taught agriculture. They argued that, if agriculture must be taught, they could teach it better in their own homes. They sent their children to schools and paid fees because they desired them to learn something else. This opposition had mounted up to such an extent that the school was in danger of being closed down and I had reluctantly to agree to the discontinuance of the agricultural course.

15. These two examples will throw light on some important aspects of the problem. Education reacts to environment in two ways-either it provides an escape or it gives a determination and a skill to change it. The first of this is the easier and the commoner approach and we should not be surprised if our rural schools are at present the agencies of increasing the exodus to the cities. They may inspire a small microscopic minority of brave souls to remain in the village and try to improve it. Such exceptions can never prove the rule and we must admit that our rural education today is organised mainly as an escapist defence from the drabness of rural existence. I also do not see how this situation can be changed within the near future.
16. I think that this problem of migration from rural to urban areas needs much closer examination. It is not bad in itself and I believe that a rapid urbanisation is inevitable in the process of industrialisation which has been started in the country. What is bad is the helplessness of its present character. People are uprooted from villages, not because they want to leave them, but because the alternative to migration is starvation. They also go to cities, not because they love the cities nor because the cities are prepared to receive them, but because they have nowhere else to go to. This migration, therefore, is creating problems for urban areas without solving any in the rural areas. What we have to do is to change this character of the migration. People should leave rural areas for cities because it is desirable that they should do so and the cities should be properly prepared to receive such immigrants. Moreover, people who want to continue in villages should find it worthwhile to do so and even those urban people who so desire, should find it advantageous to move to rural areas.
17. Such a situation can be brought about mainly by a process of economic reconstruction and the provision of adequate amenities in rural life. The great weakness of our rural areas today is that they do not afford adequate and sufficiently remunerative employment opportunities to our young men and women. Our first task, therefore, is to create such employment opportunities through any

methods – decentralised production, organisation of larger services in rural areas, etc. If such employment opportunities are created, the exodus from rural to urban areas would diminish automatically to a great extent. It will diminish still further if basic amenities such as good houses, communications, good drinking water, electricity and facilities for educational and medical relief are provided on a satisfactory basis in all rural areas. It is the absence of these facilities that drives many a person from the villages to the cities and their provision would diminish the exodus or even start some process the other way. Rural education can play a very important role in the wake of such an economic reconstruction, but not by itself alone. As Brubacher has said: "The schools cannot initiate a revolution; they can only complete and consolidate a change decided elsewhere-whether by bullets or by ballots." A revolution in rural life which will provide the minimum basic amenities of life and adequate and sufficiently remunerated employment opportunities cannot be initiated by rural education alone. It will have to be a programme of economic reconstruction pursued by itself. But once such a programme is undertaken, a properly organised system of rural education can complete and consolidate it and that is the main role it has to play.

## LECTURE II

### THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN EDUCATION A HISTORICAL SURVEY (1773-1950)

1. In the course of this talk, I propose to review the changing role of the Government of India in education from 1773 (when the Regulating Act was passed and the Government of India came into existence) to 1950 (when the present Constitution was adopted).
2. *From 1773 to 1833.* The Government of India may be said to have been born with the Regulating Act of 1773 which designated the Governor in Council of Bengal as the Governor-General in Council of Bengal and gave him a

limited authority over the Governors of Bombay and Madras. This authority was substantially increased by the Pitt's India Act of 1784. But prior to 1833, education in India had made but little progress (it had, in fact, been accepted as a State responsibility only as late as in 1813) and the Governor General of Bengal did little to control or direct the educational policies of the other parts of India. At this time, therefore, 'education' may be said to have been a 'Provincial' matter, subject only to the distant coordinating authority of the Court of Directors in England.

3. *From 1833 to 1870.* The Charter Act of 1833 introduced unitary system of Government. Under this arrangement, all revenues were raised in the name of the Central Government and all expenditure needed its approval. The Provincial Governments could not spend even one rupee or create a post, however small, without the approval of the Government of India which also was the only law-making body for the country as a whole. In other words, all executive, financial and legislative authority was exclusively vested in the Central Government and the Provinces merely acted as its agents.
4. As may easily be imagined, education thus became a purely 'Central' subject in 1833 and the entire authority in education and responsibility for it came to be vested in the Government of India. This excessively centralised system, which became more and more inconvenient as education began to expand and the territories of the Company began to grow, remained in force till 1870. As administrative difficulties began to grow, some small powers were delegated to Provincial Governments from time to time and their proposals, as those of the 'authority on the spot', carried great weight. But the character of the system remained unaltered throughout the period and education continued to be a Central subject in every sense of the term.
5. *From 1870 to 1921.* In 1870, however, Lord Mayo introduced a system of administrative decentralisation under which the Provincial Governments were made responsible for all expenditure on certain services—inclusive of education—and were given, for that purpose, a fixed grant-in-aid and

certain source of revenue. Education thus became a 'Provincial subject' for purposes of day-to-day administration. But it has to be remembered that the central Government still retained large powers of control over it. For instance, both the Central and Provincial Legislature had concurrent powers to legislate on all educational matters. It was because of this concurrent legislative jurisdiction, that the Government of India could pass the Indian Universities Act in 1904 and could also legislate for the establishment of new universities. Of the new universities established during this period in British India, only one-Lucknow-was established by an Act of the U.P. Legislature. All others- Punjab (1882), Allahabad (1887), Banaras (1915), Patna (1917), Aligarh (1920) and Dacca (1920) were established by the Central Legislature. It was for the same reason that Gokhale could then introduce his Bill for compulsory primary education in India in the Central Legislature, although it failed to pass. In administrative matters, the sanction of the Government of India was needed to the creation of all new posts above a given salary and in 1897, the Indian Educational Service was created and placed in charge of all the important posts in the Provincial Education Departments. In financial matters, the powers reserved to the Central Government were very wide. Its approval was required to all expenditure above a given figure and to the overall budget of the Provinces. These large powers of control and supervision were justified on the ground that the provincial Governments were responsible to the British Parliament through the Government of India. But whatever the cause, the net result of these powers was to make education, not so much a 'Provincial subject' as a 'concurrent subject' with two reservations: (1) the authority delegated to the Provincial Governments was fairly large; and (2) the interest shown by the Government of India in education was very uneven and depended mostly upon the personalities of the Governor-Generals—a Ripon or a Curzon could make education look almost like a 'Central subject' while, at other times, it became almost a 'Provincial subject'.

6. It must also be noted that the interest and authority of the Government of India was not restricted to any particular field, although it naturally showed very great interest in university education. It appointed the Indian Universities Commission of 1917-19. As stated earlier, it passed the Indian Universities Act in 1904 and also incorporated most of the new universities created in this field. It also sanctioned large grants-in-aid for the improvement of secondary and primary education and for the introduction of science teaching. It also reviewed and laid down policies in such matters as the education of girls, or Anglo-Indians and the establishment of schools of art. The Indian Education Commission of 1882 and the Government Resolutions on Educational Policy issued in 1904 and 1913 covered almost every aspect of education. In short, the view taken in this period was that education is a subject of *national* importance and that the Government of India must hold itself responsible for the formulation of overall educational policy: and this view was particularly strengthened in the period between 1900 and 1921 because educational developments were intimately connected with the growth of national consciousness and the struggle for independence. The main function of a Federal Government in education—to decide national policies in education—was thus clearly understood and accepted during this period.
7. The need of expert technical advice in education at the Government of India level was also felt during this period and the post of a Director-General of Education – who was to be an educationist and not a civilian and whose duty it was to advise the Government of India on educational matters—was created by Curzon and at the present time, when the very need of an advisory educational service at the Centre is being challenged in certain quarters, it may be well to recall Curzon's defence of the creation of this post.  
 "My last topic is the desirability of creating a Director-General of Education in India. Upon this point I will give my opinions for what they may be worth. To understand



the case we must first realise what the existing system and its consequences are. Education is at present a sub-heading of the work of the Home Department, already greatly overstrained. When questions of supreme educational interest are referred to us for decision, we have no expert to guide us, no staff trained to the business, nothing but the precedents recorded in our files to fall back upon. In every other department of scientific knowledge-sanitation, hygiene, forestry, mineralogy, horse-breeding, explosive-the Government possesses expert advisers. In education, the most complex and most momentous of all, we have none. We have to rely upon the opinions of officers who are constantly changing, and who may very likely never have had any experience of education in their lives. Let me point to another anomaly. Under the system of decentralisation that has necessarily and, on the whole, rightly been pursued, we have little idea of what is happening in the provinces, until, once every five years, a gentleman comes round, writes for the Government of India, the *Quinquennial Review*, makes all sorts of discoveries of which we know nothing, and discloses shortcomings which in hot haste we then proceed to redress. How and why this systemless system has been allowed to survive for all these years it passes my wit to determine. Now that we relies it, let us put an end to it for ever. I do not advocate a Minister or Member of Council for Education. I do not want anything that will turn the universities into a Department of the State, or fetter the colleges or schools with bureaucratic handcuffs. But I do want someone at headquarters who will prevent the Government of India from going wrong, and who will help us to secure that community of principle and of aim without which we go drifting about like a deserted hulk on chopping seas. I go further, and say that the appointment of such an officer, provided that he be himself an expert and an enthusiast, will check the perils of narrowness and pedantry, while his custody of the leading principles of Indian Education will prevent those vagaries of policy and sharp revulsions of action which distract our administration without reforming it. He would not issue

orders to the Local Governments; but he would be required to advise the Government of India. Exactly the same want was felt in America, where decentralisation and devolution are even more keenly cherished, and had been carried to greater lengths, than here; and it was met by the creation of a Central Bureau of Education in 1867, which has since then done invaluable work in coordinating the heterogeneous application of common principles. It is for consideration whether such an official in India as I have suggested should, from time to time, summon a representative Committee or Conference, so as to keep in touch with the local jurisdictions, and to harmonise our policy as a whole.”\*

8. The creation of this post, and the further creation of a separate Education Department in the Government of India in 1910 and the establishment of a Central Bureau of Education in 1915 made it possible to develop some other federal functions in education. For example, it is the duty of Government of India to collect educational data from the Provinces and to publish periodical reviews on the progress of education in the country – the *Clearing House function*. The Indian Education Commission (1882) recommended that the Central Government should bring out *Quinquennial Reviews* on the progress of education in India. Consequently, the first *Quinquennial Review* on the progress of education in India was published in 1886-87 and subsequent reviews were brought out in 1891-92, 1896-97, 1901-02, 1905-06, 1911-12, 1916-17 and 1921-22. Annual reviews of education were also published from 1913-14 onwards in all years in which the *Quinquennial Reviews* were not published.
9. Similarly, it is the duty of a Federal Government to carry out studies in educational problems (as part of its responsibility to provide leadership in educational thought) from time to time and to publish their findings. In particular, it is the responsibility of a Federal Government to study such developments in other

---

\*Lord Curzon in India, Vol. II, pp. 54-56.

countries as are likely to be of help in developing education at home. That both these responsibilities were understood, accepted and even fulfilled with a great competence in certain areas, can be seen from the publications issued by the Government of India during this period. Moreover, the Government of India also published reports on important events of the period. In short, the research and publications function of the Federal Government was fully accepted and established during the period under review.

10. The *coordinating function* of a Federal Government was also recognised during this period. A reference to that has already been made in the speech of Curzon quoted above. It was he who convened the first Conference of the Directors of Public Instruction in India at Simla in 1901. Then started a regular practice of convening such conferences for taking a periodical review of educational developments. An Educational Conference was held at Allahabad in 1911 and another Conference of the Directors of Public Instruction was held in 1917. With the passage of time, the need for such coordination was felt all the more keenly and a Central Advisory Board of Education was organised in 1920 with a view to assisting the Provincial Governments with expert advice.
11. Another function of a Federal Government to be recognised during this period was grant of financial assistance for educational developments in the Provinces. Reference has already been made to the financial decentralisation introduced by Mayo in 1870. That system continued to be in force in 1876-77 when a system of 'shared revenues' was introduced. Under this system, certain revenues were exclusively designated as 'Central'; certain others were designated as exclusively 'Provincial'; and the remainder were designated as 'Divided' and their receipts were shared between the Central and Provincial Governments according to an agreed contract which remained in force for a period of five years at a time. Thus the quinquennial contracts were revised in 1882-83, 1886-87, 1891-92 and 1896-97. In 1904, they were declared to be *quasi-permanent*, i.e., not liable to be changed except in a

grave emergency, and in 1912, they were declared as *permanent*. It will thus be seen that, under these financial arrangements, the entire expenditure on education was to be borne by the Provincial Governments within the resources allocated to them.

12. As may be easily imagined, these arrangements made the Provincial revenues fairly inelastic and they were unable to keep pace with rapidly growing commitments of an expanding educational system. The Government of India, therefore, started the practice of giving grants-in-aid to Provincial Governments for educational development over and above the agreed contract arrangements. Thus the fifth important function of the Federal Government, viz., *financial assistance*, also came to be accepted during this period. Fortunately, the period between 1900 and 1921 was a period of boom in world finances and the Government of India had large surpluses in its budgets. It was, therefore, comparatively easy to allocate a share of these surpluses to the Provincial Governments for expenditure on education. The magnitude of these grants can be seen from Annexure II. It may also be stated that most of these grants were *specific purpose grants*, i.e., the Government of India decided the developmental policies to be adopted and earmarked the grants given for the implementation of specified approved policies. Only a few of these were *general grants* which were at the disposal of the Provincial Governments for expenditure in any manner they liked.
13. *From 1921 to 1947.* Between 1870 and 1921 therefore, the day-to-day administration of education was delegated to the Provincial Governments and the Government of India continued to function as a Federal Government with five distinct functions which came to be recognised, viz., the functions of policymaking, clearing house of information, research and publications, coordination and financial assistance.
14. With the coming into force of the Government of India Act, 1919, however, the position changed completely. The basic idea underlying this Act was that the Government of India should continue to be responsible to the Secretary of State

for India and that the functions of the Provincial Governments should be divided into two parts—the reserved part being responsible to the Government of India and the transferred part being under the control of elected Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures. As a corollary to this decision, it was also agreed that the Government of India should have very little or no control over the transferred departments because the Ministers could not be simultaneously responsible to the Government of India as well as to their elected legislatures. These were basic political decisions and it was rather unfortunate that the division of authority in education between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments had to be made on these political considerations and not on the fundamental educational issues involved. One would have preferred that problems such as the following should have been raised and discussed on this occasion :

- 1) To what extent is education a national problem?
- 2) What should be the role of a Federal Government in education? and
- 3) What should be the relationship between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments in educational matters?

But, unfortunately, all such basic problems were ignored and the only questions discussed from a political angle were the following:

- 1) Should education be a transferred subject or not?
- 2) What should be the control which the Government of India should have over education?
15. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report suggested that the guiding principle should be to include in the transferred list those departments which afford most opportunity for local knowledge and social service, those in which Indians have shown themselves to be keenly interested, those in which mistakes which may occur though serious would

not be irremediable, and those which stand most in need of development.\* In pursuance of this principle, it was but natural to expect that education would be classed as a transferred subject, although one does not feel very happy to be told that mistakes in education are not really very important. It was, therefore, decided that, excepting for the following few reservations, education should be a Provincial subject and transferred to the control of the Indian Ministers:

1. The Banares Hindu University and such other new universities as may be declared to be all-India by the Governor-General-in-Council were excluded on the ground that these institutions were of an all-India character and had better be dealt with by the Government of India itself;
2. Colleges for Indian chiefs and educational institutions maintained by the Governor-General-in-Council for the benefit of members of His Majesty's Forces or other public servants, or their children were also excluded on the ground that these institutions ought to be under the direct control of the Government of India ; and
3. The education of Anglo-Indians and Europeans was treated as a Provincial but a *reserved* subject.

The authority to legislate on the following subjects was reserved for the Central legislature, mainly with a view to enabling the Government of India to take suitable action on the report of the Calcutta University Commission:

- (a) Questions regarding the establishment, constitution and functions of new universities ;
- (b) Questions affecting the jurisdiction of any university outside its Province ; and
- (c) Questions regarding the Calcutta University and the reorganisation of secondary education in Bengal (for a period of five years only after the introduction of the Reforms).

---

\*Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para.238

As corollary to this decision, it was also decided that the Government of India should have no control over education in the Provinces.

16. Thus came about what the Hartog Committee has rightly described as the 'divorce' of the Government of India from education. As could easily be imagined, the results were far from happy.

The Central interest in education disappeared almost completely after 1921; and when the need for retrenchment arose in 1923, the first victims were (1) the Education Department of the Government of India which lost its independent existence and was amalgamated with other departments, (2) the Central Advisory Board of Education which was dissolved, and (3) the Central Bureau of Education which was closed down. The Central grants to the Provinces for educational development also disappeared even the few powers of legislation reserved under the Act of 1919 were not exercised, and the Government of India did little beyond the clearing house function of publishing the annual and quinquennial reviews of the progress of education in India.

17. The Hartog Committee strongly criticised this unhappy position and said : "We are of opinion that the divorce of the Government of India from education has been unfortunate; and, holding as we do, that education is essentially a national service, we are of opinion that steps should be taken to consider a new the relation of the Central Government with this subject. We have suggested that the Government of India should serve as a centre of educational experience of the different provinces. But we regard the duties of the Central Government as going beyond that. We cannot accept the view that it should be entirely relieved of all responsibility for the attainment of universal primary education. It may be that some of the provinces, in spite of all efforts, will be unable to provide the funds necessary for that purpose, and the Government of India should, therefore, be constitutionally enabled to

make good such financial deficiencies in the interests of India as a whole."\*

It is also interesting to know that, for some time after 1921, there was an outburst of strong provincial feelings and the divorce of the Government of India from education was even welcomed in some quarters. But it did not take the Provincial Governments long to realise that this was a mistake and that something had to be done to create a national agency and machinery for the development of education. It was, therefore, possible to revise the earlier decision and the Government of India revived the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1935; the Central Bureau of Education was also revived, on a recommendation made by the Central Advisory Board of Education, in 1937 ; and finally the old Education Department was also revived as a Ministry of Education in 1946. The decisions of 1921 were, therefore, very largely undone by 1947.

18. Between 1935 and 1947, therefore, the role of the Government of India in education was again broadened and the several functions which had fallen into disuse between 1923 to 1935 were again resumed. For example, the coordinating function was resumed with great vigour and the Central Advisory Board of Education addressed itself to the study and discussion of almost every field of educational activity and finally prepared, and presented to the nation, a plan for the educational development in India during the next 40 years (1944). The publication function was also resumed and the reconstituted Central Bureau brought out a large number of publications on different aspects of the educational problem in India. The clearing house function was continued and its extent and efficiency were improved. The only functions developed in the earlier period and not resumed now were two—research and financial assistance. In spite of these limitations, however, the larger and more significant role that was now being played by the Government of India was appreciated all over the country; and the general feeling was that this role needs to be further strengthened and extended.

---

\*Report, p. 346

19. This brief historical survey of the role of the Government of India in education will show that it has passed through a number of stages. Prior to 1833, it had hardly any role to play; between 1833 and 1870, education was virtually a Central subject; between 1870 and 1921, the day-to-day administration was vested in Provincial Governments, but the Government of India discharged five distinct functions, viz., the functions of policy making, clearing house of information, research and publications, coordination and financial assistance; between 1921 and 1935, the wheels of the clock were turned back and there was an almost total divorce between education and the Central Government; but fortunately, more progressive policies were adopted after 1935 and the Government of India began to play, once again, a larger and a more fruitful role in education.

### LECTURE III

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AT ALLAHABAD (1867-87)

1. The origin of the Allahabad University may be traced to a proposal made by the British Indian Association of North Western Provinces, Aligarh, of which the late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was a leading member. This Association submitted a memorial to the Governor-General on 1 August 1867 which pointed out that the use of English as the exclusive medium of instruction in the Calcutta University confined the benefits of higher education to a few persons and that it also prevented the students from acquiring a deep and abiding knowledge of the subjects learnt and made the following four demands:
  - 1) That a system of public education of the highest class be established, in which the arts, sciences, and other branches of literature may be taught through the instrumentality of the Vernacular;
  - 2) That an examination in the Vernacular be annually held in those very subjects in which the student is now examined in English in the Calcutta University;

- 3) That degrees now conferred on English students for proficiency in various departments of knowledge, be likewise conferred on the students who successfully pass in the same subjects in the Vernacular; and
  - 4) That either a Vernacular Department be attached to the Calcutta University, or an independent Vernacular University be created for the North Western Provinces.
2. The wisdom and foresight shown by this document can hardly be over-praised; but it obviously advocated policies which were too radical for those early days and it is, therefore, no surprise that these requests were turned down. In its reply to this petition, the Government of India admitted that the views expressed by the Aligarh memorialists were fundamentally sound. It, however, felt that "the Vernaculars of the country do not as yet afford the materials for conveying instruction of the comparatively high order contemplated by the British Indian Association." Copies of the Memorial and of the Government's reply thereto were, however, sent to the Government of Punjab which, was agitating for a separate Punjab University and to the Government of N.W.P. It was now suggested that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab should get in touch with the Lieutenant Governor of N.W.P. and that they should make a joint proposal for the establishment of a university of Northern India as a whole. But since Sir Donald Macleod, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, showed no inclination to work out the suggestion, Sir William Muir, the Lieutenant-Governor of N.W. Provinces and Oudh, decided to examine the issue independently for his own Province and to submit his own proposals on the subject to the Government of India.
3. He consulted three officials on the subject – Mr. M.S. Howell, a former Inspector of Schools; Mr. H.S. Reid, the former Director of Public Instruction; and Mr. Kempson, the Director of Public Instruction. Messrs. Reid and Howell agreed that the conditions essential for the establishment of a new university did not then exist in the North-Western Provinces or even in the Punjab; that English should be

studied as a compulsory subject but not used as a medium of instruction; that the modern Indian languages should be adopted as the media of instruction, first in secondary schools and then in the colleges also; and that these objectives could be achieved by introducing some modifications in the Calcutta University. Mr. Kempson did not share the enthusiasm of Messrs. Howell and Reid for the adoption of modern Indian languages as media of instruction. But he agreed with them on two main points: (1) that the educational situation in the N.W. Provinces were to be properly met. He, therefore, suggested that there should be a Branch Syndicate of the Calcutta University for Upper India. "I would locate this Syndicate", he wrote, "at Allahabad, and place within its jurisdiction the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, the Central Provinces, Rajpootana and Bihar. It would have a Vice-Chancellor and a Registrar of its own, the former of whom would confer degrees by license from the Chancellor at Calcutta, and have the power in concert with his Syndicate of managing the business of standards and tests under subordination to the Calcutta Senate."

4. With this advice before him, Sir William Muir, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, came to the conclusion that the educational situation in his Province did not justify the establishment of a new university; and he suggested the following modifications of the Calcutta University to make its influence more effectively in the North-Western Provinces:
  - (1) A greater representation should be given to person from the North-Western Provinces in the Senate of the Calcutta University;
  - (2) A branch of the Senate of the Calcutta University should be established in these Provinces; and
  - (3) A convocation should be annually held at Allahabad for confirmation of degrees granted by the Calcutta University.

5. These proposals were forwarded by the Government of India to the Calcutta University for its opinion. Mr. E.C. Bayley, the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University (who was also the Secretary to the Government of India in charge of education) was inclined to accept the proposal that greater representation should be given to persons from the N.W. Provinces in the Senate of the Calcutta University; and he even suggested the revision of the rules for the transaction of business at the meetings of the Senate with a view to giving a greater opportunity to absent members for participation in the deliberations through written minutes. He was also prepared to consider the holding of an annual convocation at Allahabad. But he strongly opposed the idea of having a Branch Syndicate for the N.W. Provinces on the ground that the authority of Syndicate at Calcutta must continue to be undivided, an argument which has a strong and obvious justification. Then turning to the two major problems of encouragement of Oriental literature and the adoption of modern Indian languages as media of instruction, Mr. Bayley proposed that the examinations for university entrance should be optionally conducted in the modern Indian languages and that in some examinations, the students may be permitted to substitute English by a higher standard of attainment in the classical languages. The Calcutta University accepted these views and decided, in its meeting held on 29 January, 1872, (a) that for the better encouragement of Vernacular education and literature, an examination in Vernacular be instituted by the University, on the plan of the middle-class examinations conducted by British universities; (b) that a convocation for conferring degrees upon graduates of the North-West Provinces, the Punjab, Oudh and the Central Provinces be held annually at Allahabad; (c) that notices of meeting of the Faculty of Arts for the discussion of all business of importance be circulated to all members, resident and non-resident, in order that any minute they may forward to the Register may be laid before the meeting of the Faculty; (d) that Persian be added to the list of second languages for the First Arts and B.A. examinations; and (e)

that as part of the Entrance Examination in Oriental languages, the examiner shall set a paper containing passages in English to be translated into one of the Vernaculars of India at the option of the candidates, the passages being taken from a newspaper on other current literature of the day. Detailed rules for the conduct of the examinations in the modern Indian languages were also framed and thus the first phase of this long controversy came to an end.

6. Even as early as 1869, the Lieutenant-Governor of the N.W. Provinces opined that his great need was, not a university, but the establishment of a College at Allahabad. The establishment of the Lahore University College in the same year also acted as a stimulus to a further effort in this direction; and on 15 August 1869, a memorial signed by 55 citizens of Allahabad (who had donated about Rs. 17000 in total) requested the early establishment of a College at Allahabad, the capital of the N.W. Provinces. The original idea was that this College should cater to the needs of N.W. Provinces as well as to those of Oudh. But the Chief Commissioner of Oudh opined that the needs of Oudh in higher education were already being met by the Canning College at Lucknow and that the people of his area would not be interested in contributing to the establishment of a College at Allahabad. The proposal was, therefore, restricted to the North-Western Provinces only and, on this basis, the Government of N.W. Provinces submitted a detailed proposal for the approval of the Government of India in May, 1870. By this time the total amount of contributions collected had risen to Rs. 174955 including "the princely contribution of a lakh of rupees by the Maharajah of Vizianagram and large sums from His Highness the Nawab of Rampore, Maharajas of Rewah and Banaras and other leading chiefs and landholders in these Provinces." The proposal made by Government had three main features:

- a) The establishment of a University College at Allahabad which would also be combined with a High School;

- b) The concentration of the teaching power in the Central College at Allahabad, by transferring the staff, wherever necessary and possible, from the other colleges in the Provinces to the proposed College at Allahabad; and
- c) Assisting the building of the College with a grant-in-aid of Rs. 50,000 from the Government funds.

7. The Government of India accepted, in principle, the proposal to establish a College at Allahabad. In doing so, however, it pointed out that "the Government of India offer no opinion at present to the desirability of establishing a University in the North-Western Provinces, or to acquiesce immediately in the withdrawal of the new College from the Influence of the Calcutta University." Secondly, the Government of India also did not like the idea of combining the College at Allahabad with a High School and suggested that the two should be kept separate. Thirdly, the Government of India did not appreciate the suggestion that the status of the other Colleges in the N.W. Provinces may be reduced in order to build up the College at Allahabad, and desired that the efficiency of the Banares College, to the maintenance of which it was pledged, should not be adversely affected. Subject to these limitations the Government of India appreciated the large donations given by the people towards the project and directed that further steps towards the establishment of the College may now be taken. Permission was also given to reappropriate Rs. 50,000 for the College building from savings elsewhere. The correspondence was also submitted to the Secretary of State for India who approved of the above orders and wrote. "I trust that hereafter the College at Allahabad may expand into a University for the North Western-Provinces and for the Punjab."
8. On receipt of these orders, the Government of N.W. Provinces finalised its scheme for the establishment of the College at Allahabad which began to function from 1 July 1872. With this achievement, the position in the N.W. Provinces became somewhat similar to that in the

Punjab because both areas now had central colleges which were looked upon as nuclei of future universities and it may also be said that, with this achievement, the second phase of this history comes to an end.

9. The third and the final stage in the establishment of the Allahabad University began in 1883 when the Indian Education Commission recommended that a new university may be established with advantage at Allahabad to meet the needs of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh and the Central Provinces. This recommendation was accepted by the Government of India who wrote, in October 1884, to the Government of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh that "the Governor-General in Council is willing to consider the question of establishing a separate University for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh with, perhaps, the Central Provinces. The Government of India would be glad to receive the Lieutenant-Governor's proposals on this subject at an early date." The Director of Public Instruction, N.W. Provinces and Oudh, was thereupon asked to consult the various interests involved and to submit a detailed scheme. He, therefore wrote a letter to several officials and non-officials and called for their suggestions on the various issues involved. From the large body of opinions received, I would just quote two as illustrative of the interest of the correspondence as a whole.
10. The first is note by Bireshwar Mitter, Professor of Law in the Banaras College who put forward the plea that Banaras, and not Allahabad, was better suited to be the seat of the new university. "The Muir Central College", he wrote "is an institution of abnormal growth, without any of the traditionary influence which comes from its own associations. Banaras, as the sacred city of the Hindus, has for ages past been the seat of Brahmanical learning. It has had a college, in the Western sense of the term, in full vigour and activity long before Sir William Muir dreamt of the central college at the capital of the provincial Government. Banaras is the Oxford of India in point of learning and culture; Allahabad is but the mushroom of

yesterday's growth. Transfer all the teaching capacity of the Allahabad college to Banaras, and with it the institution will acquire a position which its rival of Allahabad will never attain to. The population of Allahabad is an ever-floating one; in Banaras people live and work and die. The present reduced condition of Banaras is due to the fact that the central college has been enriched at its expense. An Oxford could not be transplanted into London; it will grow on its own soil. Without expatiating on this subject any further, I may be permitted to observe that the existence of the two State Colleges, in both the oriental and English departments, is a matter of necessity." The second is a note from Mr. M.S. Howell who compared Hindi and Urdu. "There are only two vernaculars of any importance in these provinces", he wrote, "Urdu and English. Some add a third, which they call Hindi; but if Hindi includes Arabic and Persian words in its vocabulary, it is a mere variety of Urdu; and if, as is sometimes asserted by its partisans, it altogether excludes such words, then, so far as my experience goes, it is a purely imaginary language, having no existence in the tongues of men, women or children. The fact is that all the natives in these Provinces use Arabic and Persian words, the degree of admixture varying partly with the abstruseness and complexity of the subject, and partly with the race, birthplace, social position, education, and profession of the speaker. The objection of Hindus to calling their language by the Persian name (Urdu) is purely sentimental; and probably the whole controversy might be avoided by the use of some neutral term like Hindustani. But whatever a student's vernacular be, he ought to be taught and examined in it, because it is the language that he thinks in. The present practice of requiring native students to learn higher mathematics in English is as absurd as the ancient practice of requiring English students to learn them in Latin, since disguise of the form tends to produce confusion of the substance."

11. Mr. White, the Director of Public Instruction in the N.W. Provinces and Oudh, formulated an interesting scheme for the Allahabad University. His main contention was that it



should not be a purely affiliating University like Calcutta. He was of the view that the proposed University at Allahabad should essentially be a teaching University which would utilise the college at Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, Banaras and Aligarh as its constituent units. "A condition to the attainment of a degree", he wrote, "should be residence in a high college and attendance on the lectures of approved professors. If then, the ground were unencumbered with the fabrics of existing colleges, the best course would be to make the university co-extensive with a single college; we could thus obtain a staff of professors such as has never been collected in one Indian college. The numbers of the students and professors would give a corporate power to the university such as it will take a long time to acquire if they remain scattered over many colleges for each of which they are insufficient. Each degree could then be given not merely on the result of an examination, but as the final stamp of the university or a college career every stage of which had been under the eyes of the professors who granted the degree. Such a college and university would in a few years a stronger mark on education than any college at present existing in this country. It would, moreover, speedily become the centre of intellectual life of these Provinces and an *alma mater* to which every professional man might look back with affection and reverence, to which from time to time he would delight to return, and upon which he would perhaps bestow part of that wealth which it had trained him to accumulate. If all our colleges were collected into one teaching university, we should possess an institution world, and eventually become one of its great universities. The time might come for other universities to arise by its side, for the progress of education in these Provinces might be so rapid under the policy I advocate, that not one but several universities would be required.

"There are, however, special difficulties in the way of carrying out such a scheme. We have apparently no alternative but to accept Allahabad as the seat of such a

university, and Allahabad is hardly a suitable place for it. It will be very difficult to ignore the claims of the colleges at Lucknow, Agra, Aligarh, and Banaras, for all these would be extinguished by such a proceeding. If the only entry into professional life was through the University of Allahabad, hardly a student would be found to enter the classrooms, and they would be reduced to the functions of high schools-functions which they might perform most admirably, better than they now do those of colleges. Any course, however, which would have this result would involve the opposition of influential bodies; the existing professors would have to be provided for, and few of them would be fitted for professorships in the Allahabad University. Though I would on general grounds advocate the foundation of such a university, I do not think it would be expedient to weight ourselves with the opposition it would arouse. We must recognise our existing colleges and endeavour to incorporate them into one teaching university. I have laid stress on the point that as a preliminary condition of the university degree a student should live in close and prolonged intercourse with European professors of high culture and character, in order that he may learn not merely the commonplaces of the advanced thought of Europe, but become imbued with the spirit of European culture and a high sense of duty; for this can be learnt best from human intercourse and perhaps it cannot be learnt otherwise. This condition is more important than the absorption of the amount of learning required by the university examinations. Thus every one of our colleges would be required to maintain a very high standard in its professional staff in order to justify its incorporation in the university. I do not think there is then any possibility of our recognise any colleges besides those of Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Banaras and Allahabad, and the grounds upon which I would have advocated the foundation of a single university co-existent with its colleges, would deter me from recommending any further extension in the number of colleges; all the meagre institutions now called colleges should devote themselves

to their proper function, that performed by the high schools or *gymnasias* of Germany.

"The practical problem, then, is to combine these five colleges into a teaching university. In the first place I would, for the present, confine our university to the Faculty of Arts. Whether the theological faculty will ever be developed, we cannot say. Law and Medicine are special studies which must be taken up by our students after their general education has been completed, and at present we are not engaged in the question of technical training, but with that preliminary education which I have assumed to be its necessary preliminary. These faculties must be eventually combined in our university as they are in the great universities of Europe, and not until they are so combined will the term *universities studio rum* be properly applicable to our institution. For the present, however, they need not be considered."

13. These suggestions have been quoted in extense because this was the first time that the creation of a teaching university was being discussed. But unfortunately this most important of Mr. White's suggestion was not accepted, although he had made it very clear that he would prefer to continue under Calcutta rather than have a purely examining university at Allahabad.
14. These proposals were forwarded by the Government of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh to the Government of India on 7 August, 1886. In this letter, the Provincial Government was very eloquent in establishing the need for a new university at Allahabad. But it watered down the main proposal of Mr. White—to have a teaching university, very considerably. It said :

"The University, therefore, which it is proposed to establish would, for the present at least, confine its operations to the direction of the methods and aims of instruction; adapting them to the needs, circumstances, traditions, and predilections of a country that is rapidly recovering its forward place in the intellectual progress of India. This circumscription of its function is the less to

regretted, as it may be hoped that the Muir College recently opened at Allahabad may secure, to a limited and provisional degree, yet not wholly inadequate, most of the objects for which a teaching University is required. If that college continues to receive the support that it may reasonably expect, it should establish a very prominent position in the provinces, and maintain a standard of academical training which would be emulated and imitated by the coordinate institutions in other neighbouring cities.

"All, then, that need be provided for the present, is a Senate, with a Syndicate and a Registrar. Minor details may be left to be selected hereafter; but His Honour anticipates no difficulty in finding sufficient material for a Senate of 50 or 60 members, of whom a certain fixed minimum proportion should be native residents of the provinces. The Senate would contain representatives of the local administration of the High Court, of the legal profession, and of all who are engaged in, or are conversant with, the practical work of education, or who take interest in the higher branches of science and literature. All questions of great and general importance would be brought before this body; but the ordinary duties of administration would be discharged by a Syndicate consisting of from five to ten members, and including one or more representatives for each of the faculties of the recognised university curriculum. These would necessarily reside in Allahabad; and one of their most important duties would be the appointment of examiners to conduct the periodical examinations. The examiners would either be drawn from members of the Educational Service, or the duty might be delegated to competent men in other parts of India."

15. All that was now proposed was, therefore, to establish another university on the pattern of Calcutta and the only concession made to the proposals of Mr. White was to include an enabling provision in the University Act to the effect that the University may assume teaching functions at a later date, should they be deemed necessary. It was,

therefore, not difficult for the Government of India to recommend these proposals to the Secretary of State for India and for the Secretary of State to sanction them. The Allahabad University Act, 1887, was, therefore, passed and brought into force on 23 September, 1887, exactly 20 years after the proposal was first put forward by the British Indian Association of Aligarh on 1 August, 1867. This Act is on the usual traditional lines except for the fact that it authorises the Senate to provide for the appointment of Professors and Lecturers. These enabling provisions of the Allahabad University Act were, however, ineffective in practice and this University also continued to be a purely examining University, the main reason for this failure being the unwillingness of the Government to provide funds required for the purpose.

---

 15
 

---

## Education and Rural Development (1982)\*

---

The object of this paper is to evaluate the Indian experience in providing education to rural area, one in relating such education to rural area, one in relating such education to the wider problem of rural development, during the last two centuries (1813-1978). It is hoped that the exercise would be of some use in deciding the implementing future policies in rural education.

### A HISTORICAL REVIEW

#### Rural Development (1813-1900)

The history of Indian rural areas during the nineteenth century is the sad story of their gradual impoverishment and loss of earlier autonomy under the impact of British conquest. Their impoverishment was due to a variety of reasons: linking the village economy integrally to the national economy so that it lost its erstwhile self-sufficiency and became vulnerable to ever increasing external exploitation; comparative neglect of the development of agriculture, except where it was essential to produce the raw materials needed by British industries; the almost total destruction of village industries in order to find markets for British industrial products; and an increase in absentee landlordism (with all the consequent exploitation involved) because the landlords migrated to towns so they got wider opportunities in the new organised and modern sector. Side by side, the village also lost its autonomy in several fields. The

---

\* National Seminar, Indian Inst. of Education, Pune- 411029 (19-21 Feb. 1982)

introduction of a centralised legal system made severe inroads on its earlier tradition of judicial self-sufficiency. As other administrative department got organised (e.g. police), the village functions in their fields got similarly circumscribed, and so on. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Indian village was fairly well-to-do and largely autonomous so that it could be described as an almost equal partner with the urban communities in our national life. By the end of the century, the Indian village had been awfully impoverished, irrevocably chained to an exploitative national economy, bereft of a large part of its earlier autonomy and a peripheral dependent upon the towns and cities which thrives at its expense and occupied a central position in national life. This was an era, not of rural development, but of rural impoverishment, exploitation and subordination. All this sordid story is too well-known to be described in any detail.

The 'developmental' aspects of British rule were limited in perspective. These could be stated as follows:

- maintaining law, order and tranquillity;
- winning the loyalties of the well-to-do or learned upper classes (princes, landlords, traders, Brahmins, etc.) and ignoring their exploitation of the people, except where it directly interfered with British interests;
- Communication between principal administrative and military centres for consolidation of authority (as well as for facilitating exports of raw materials and import of finished goods);
- Setting up of a modern administration built round collection of revenue, administration of justice, and maintenance of law and order;
- Introduction of modern services like posts and telegraphs, printing presses, modern medicine, veterinary treatment etc. primarily to meet the need of the army, the civil administration, and the European employees of government;
- Introduction of modern education system, primarily to create a class of interpreters and intermediaries, and secondarily, to spread Western knowledge among the people;

- Improvement of agriculture especially to promote the production of raw materials like cotton needed by British industries or articles like tea needed by British public; and.
- Non-intervention in religious and social matters to avoid disaffection.

Obviously, there is very little scope for rural 'development' in these priorities. What is even more important, the British policy of development was to begin with the metropolitan cities like Calcutta, Bombay or Madras, then proceed to the smaller towns at the district and Tehsil levels and then finally to reach the periphery called the villages. In other words, the British plan to develop India was divided into two phases: (1) In the first phase, they tried to improve the cities and towns (where the British officers lived) by the introduction of modern amenities (or westernisation of the urban areas); and (2) in the second phase, they tried to urbanise the villages through a similar programmes. But as resources were limited and the pace of development was slow, this policy could not even reach the bigger villages (to say nothing of the smaller ones) by the time the century came to an end. Consequently, there were hardly any attempts in the nineteenth century, at rural development which could be considered as some compensation, however small, for the devastation of village life by the political, economic and administrative measures referred to earlier.

#### Rural Education (1813–1900)

We are concerned here mainly with the problem of rural education; and it is the developments in this field that we shall proceed to discuss in some detail.

Between 1813 (when the East India Company was compelled to accept responsibility for the education of the Indian people) and 1900, the British administrators laid the foundations of the modern educational system. As it finally emerged, its main objective was to spread western knowledge to the people of India through the medium of the English language. It was divided into three stages: (1) elementary education which used the Indian languages as media of instruction and taught the three R's and elementary knowledge of modern sciences and humanities; (2) secondary education whose professed grand objective was to

teach the English language; and (3) higher education which fulfilled the main objective of the system to spread western knowledge through English. Here each stage prepared a student, not so much for a specific vocation or entry into the world of work, but only for the next stage. However, as educated persons were few and jobs were growing plentifully in government and outside, getting such employment became the object of every student and he generally discontinued his education when he got a job of his choice. There was also no question of relating the curricula at any stage to environment and they were consequently equally alien to both urban and rural settings. In fact, the education system was singularly uniform and aimed at creating a few westernised individuals and urban pockets in the country.

The modern educational institutions first began in metropolitan capitals, cities and towns where a public demand for them had arisen. In the earlier years, when funds were limited, these were necessarily few. But as time passed, the number of primary schools, secondary schools and colleges began to grow and in 1857, universities also were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. In the rural areas, modern primary schools were the first institutions to be established; and as this was done, the traditional indigenous schools generally died out. Several rural areas (District and Taluk Boards) were authorised to establish primary and secondary schools in their jurisdiction with the help of a local cess levied on land revenue and government grants. This gave considerable fillip to the spread of modern education in rural areas.

#### **Rural Development and Education (1900-1947)**

By 1900, however, certain political factors changed the situation. The Indian leaders who were then spearheading a movement for reform of government and for giving a greater voice to Indians in administration were urban based and their work also was confined to the cities and towns. By the end of the century, however, they began to argue that they also represented the dumb millions of people who lived in the rural areas, highlighted their grievances and demanded redress. This worried the government which put forward a counter-argument that it is the British Civil Servant in India (and not the Indian leaders) who was responsible

for the protection of the humble Indian peasant from exploitation. Thus began a fight for the capture of the allegiance of the rural people. Gokhale, for instance, moved a bill for compulsory primary education (1912) which was thrown out by government. But Lord Curzon had already initiated a programme of spreading primary education, especially in rural areas, which was expanded through a larger provision of funds. Rabindranath Tagore started his Institute of Sriniketan devoted to rural education and reconstruction. Mahatma Gandhi made a categorical declaration that India lived in villages and started several constructive activities with the object of improving the life of the rural people. As a counter-offensive to such national efforts, government launched several programmes of rural development. The official efforts extended primary education considerably in the rural areas; and the non-official effort established in them a fairly large number of secondary schools (and even some colleges) which resolved official support. Between 1900 and 1947, therefore, both government and national agencies vied with each other in organising programmes of rural development and spreading education in villages. The attempts at rural development were however largely experimental, tentative and on an inadequate scale. They did not therefore have any worthwhile impact. But for several reasons, and particularly because of the national struggle for freedom, there was a remarkable awakening among the rural people. This led to a demand for the expansion of educational facilities and the government tried to meet it as far as possible. By 1947, therefore, the imbalance between the educational facilities in urban and rural areas was considerably reduced. Moreover, a large proportion of rural students went to towns and cities to study in secondary schools and colleges. Assisting such students through scholarships and provision of hostels was an important programme which received non-official as well as official support.

There are two other issues that deserve consideration here: (1) to what extent are the programmes of rural education related to the local environment and (2) is the quality of rural schools so good as that of urban schools? On both these efforts, the record was very negative. Early in the present century, government tried to prepare special curricula for rural schools. It was not an ambitious programme and aimed merely at teaching elementary

agriculture and to relate the teaching of other subjects to rural problems (e.g. arithmetic to money-lending or geometry to measurement of fields). But it did not become popular and the villagers protested against it on the ground that it was inferior to what was taught in urban schools. The idea was, therefore, given up. The scheme of health education which built elementary education round socially useful productive work was not necessarily limited to rural schools. But in practice, the experiment had been introduced largely in rural areas and one of the main grounds of attack against it was that it discriminated between urban and rural areas. In fact, the enlightened rural opinion (which meant the views of the well-to-do people in villages) was so strongly opposed to the idea of discriminating between the urban and rural schools and no attempt to adjust rural curricula to local environment could succeed and a policy of adopting a single common curriculum for all the schools in a State at each stage (whether located in urban or rural areas) came to be universally adopted.

On the issue of quality also, the picture is equally negative. By and large the rural schools received less attention because concerned officials lived in urban areas. There was also no enlightened local opinion (nor any authority) to look after them. In buildings and equipment, they were always inferior to the urban schools whose 'poor relations' they became. What is worse, it was the urban areas that attracted the abler teachers. Consequently, the quality of rural schools was far from satisfactory and generally inferior to that of the urban schools. As both types of schools followed the same programme, it would have been correct to say that 'rural education was urban education conducted with greater inefficiency'.

#### **Rural Development and Education (1947-78)**

Systematic and large-scale attempts at rural development began to be made only after independence. The Indian national leadership was committed to improve life in the rural areas. Besides, the awakening in rural areas now reached high levels due especially to adult franchise. The large-scale programmes of agricultural development threw up a new leadership of rich and well-to-do farmers which began to exert an increasing pull in

politics. The voice of the villages would be no longer be ignored and, consequently, several programmes of rural development have been initiated in the last thirty years. These include: agricultural development (including irrigation, and land reforms); dairy development for supply of milk to urban counties! extension of electric supply; small scale village and cottage industries (including khadi), extension of cooperatives and banking facilities) better communications and transport; better postal services; better health facilities through primary health centres and (new) community health workers; improved cattle-breeding and veterinary services; better marketing arrangements; and so on. In short, the earlier two-phase policy of (1) westernising the urban areas and (2) urbanising the villages was now pursued vigorously. Large investments continued to be made in the further development of cities and towns which still had priority and received the lion's share of resources available. But the rural areas (which had received practically no attention before 1900 and only a limited attention than at any time in the past. It must be admitted that rural life has changed considerably and improved in several respects as a result of all these efforts. But even these large efforts have proved to be inadequate to make a significant dent on the chronic rural problems of poverty, unemployment, ill-health and ignorance. What is needed is a much larger and better planned effort in the years ahead.

It is to be expected that expansion and improvement of rural education should have been an important sector of this post-independence programme of rural development; and it is no wonder that intensive efforts were made to spread education in the rural areas. The best achievements have been at the elementary stage. The primary school has now become almost ubiquitous and at present more than 95 per cent of the children have a primary school within walking distance from their home. The middle school is still not so ubiquitous but about 70 per cent of the children have easy access to it. The progress on the secondary education front has been even more noticeable. It was the secondary and not the primary school that has been the prestige institution for rural areas during this period and consequently a very large number of secondary schools were set up in villages. There was also a demand to provide facilities for higher education in the rural areas and some rural colleges also come up. But

obviously, there are inherent limitations to locating higher education in the rural areas. At the present time, it may be said that most rural children have a fair access to primary, middle and secondary education through institutions located in the rural areas themselves. Many of them also continue to have access to secondary and higher education (which has immensely expanded) through institutions located in nearby towns and cities. Of course, there is still wide gap between access to education in the urban and rural areas. But this gap is far smaller now than it was in 1947.

What about the qualitative aspects? The progress here continues to be far from satisfactory. The idea of differentiating rural curricula from urban ones has hardly been pursued in the post-independence period (except for the teaching of agriculture in some rural secondary schools) and all urban and rural schools follow same pattern. Even school vacations continue the same, although a different arrangement for vacations would meet rural needs better. The pressures from the public, teacher, and all other concerned are strongly exerted in favour of an identical system of education for urban and rural areas. Similarly, the quality of rural schools continues to be poor and has probably become poorer. It becomes all the more noticeable at the secondary. The rural secondary schools are small and therefore unable to provide the needed equipment, — and specialised expertise. The per student cost in these institutions therefore goes up the quality goes down in comparison with their counterparts. The situation becomes even more at the collegiate stage.

#### THE BASIC ISSUES

Against this historical background, let us look at the basic issues concerning the problem.

#### Modes of Development

The first obvious question relates to the model development that we should follow. As pointed out earlier, the British administrators adopted a two model of development wherein they wanted to westernise the urban areas and then to urbanise the rural areas. We are still stuck with model. The industrial civilisation of the developed countries with its philosophy of consumerism and mass production with the use of high

technology regardless of its consequences on environment of employment (with a capitalist base that makes the situation even worse) is our goal. Our cities and towns are expanding and the metropolitan cities have growth to such an extent as to make it impossible to live decently in them. Our urban problems are therefore becoming more and more complex every day; and yet we are not taking any effective steps to control urban growth. On the other hand, we are investing immense resources to make our towns and cities like islands transplanted from the west. The demonstration effect of this plan is so great that the rural areas also want to be like towns and cities. It is obvious that there is just no solution to our rural problems on the basis of this model which will complicate both urban and rural problems with the message of time. It is therefore very necessary to move away from this school. The subject of alternative models therefore assumes crucial significance; and it is obvious that the solutions to the rural education problems will have to be found within the framework of these alternative models.

What are these alternative models? It is unfortunate that this basic issue does not receive adequate attention, but it is in fact this issue alone that provides the greatest scope for debate research and imaginative thinking. Some of its major aspects can be stated here:

- we will have to move away from the model of the consumption-oriented society of the west, distinguish between quality of life and standards of living, and strive to build up a new society based on an alternative set of human values. Here the Gandhian thought is extremely relevant.
- We should move away from the concept of imported technologies from the west and generate and diffuse alternative technologies suited to our conditions.
- We can not think of divergent models and value systems for urban and rural areas. We should develop a vision of an integrated national society in which the urban and rural areas will have complementary and mutually supportive role. Such a plan will include control or urbanisation (especially in big cities) and also elimination of extremely small villages which are not viable.

- A model of decentralised administration will have to be adopted. In the rural areas, we should be able to create viable units (consisting of groups of villages) which will be considerably self reliant and able to decide on most issues concerning their day-to-day life. They will have to assume responsibility, not only for civic amenities, but for economic activities as well. They would also be responsible for formulating and implementing integrated development plans for their areas.
- The people in the rural areas will have to be educated, organised and enabled to assist them selves in formulating and implementing plans or rural development.
- Sectoral plans on the alternative models will have to be prepared and implemented. For instance, on the present models of housing, the problem of rural housing is just not soluble. We will have to prepare new models of housing (with mud and brick structures) if the problem is to be solved in the near future. Similar observations could be made about almost every sector such as health, public sanitation (including disposal on night soil), energy supply, recreational amenities etc.
- We should cease to look at rural education as mere extension of urban education. Instead, an attempt should be made to adjust rural education to local environment and to link it with rural development.

It is only the last issue which we shall examine here in some depth.

### Urban vs. Rural Education

One basic issue to be decided is this: should rural education be the same as urban education or should it be different and adjusted to local environment and needs? As was shown earlier, we have insisted so far on an identity between urban and rural education and the consequences of this approach for rural education. The opposition to this view will come from those who argue a fallacious case for equality. They have to be told that equality of educational opportunity does not mean identity of educational provision; and that to extend urban education to all rural children because about 5 to 10 per cent of them will later migrate to the urban areas is neither fair nor useful. Instead, it would be a far

better policy to provide bridges between urban and rural education so that those rural children who went to migrate to urban areas can do additional bridge courses and qualify themselves. There was one such bridge in the past; rural children who completed an elementary education course of seven years without English (for which there was no provision in their local school) were given a one-year intensive course in English to enable them to join class VIII of a secondary school in the urban areas where children had already had in introduction to the English language. Bridges of this type can always be built for all sort of needs and care can be taken to ensure that every rural child who had enrolled a differentiated course would be enabled to migrate to urban education as and when needed without any major difficulty.

There is another exception that can and should be made, for instance, there are several institution in the rural areas which provide instruction in urban courses for those children or youth who have decided to go to the urban areas and have also made up children's minds about what they want to do. I have seen good art schools and schools for typists and stenographers in villages. They provide art education or instruction in shorthand and typing to young persons who desire to migrate to the urban areas; and this education is necessarily less costly and even better. These schools are therefore meeting a felt need and such institutions deserve to be encouraged. Their existence does not effect the basic position that rural education must be adjusted to local environment or oriented to rural development.

What does orienting rural education to local environment or rural development mean? There are five issues here that need amplification –

- A certain core of all education is common to both urban and rural education. This will include the study of languages, mathematics, health education, games and sports, fine arts, etc. We should try to preserve this core because it provides the common bond of citizenship between both urban and rural children.
- In some subjects, the basic concepts will be the same but the illustrations and applications will differ, depending upon the environment. For instance, even though the



curricula in the natural sciences may be the same, the methods of teaching will vary according to the environment. The same will be true of work-experience or social service which should form an integral and obligatory part of the curricula.

- Certain subjects (e.g. use and knowledge of the telephone) can be taught earlier in an urban school while certain others (e.g. growing certain crops) can be taught earlier and more easily in a rural school.
- Emphasis on some items will be greater in the urban areas while a different sort of items will have to be selected for emphasis in the rural areas.
- Holidays, and especially vacations, should differ in the urban and rural areas.

In short, the curricula for rural schools should be drawn up for those 96 per cent of the rural children who will continue to live in the rural areas for developing them rather than for the 5 per cent who will migrate to the urban areas. In these programmes, due place should be given to the involvement of children in programmes of rural development such as social forestry, public sanitation, improvement of communications, agricultural development, etc.

In fact, the variety of rural development programmes is so large that it is possible to involve all rural children and youth in them with great advantage. When such programmes are worked out, it will certainly be found that the special rural curricula become more useful and interesting to rural children without creating difficulties in their transition to urban schools or urban life.

### Non-formal Education

Another point which becomes evident is that their exclusive dependence on the formal school (which has been our policy so far) is not at all suited to the rural situation. This does not mean that such dependence is suited to urban areas. Even there the exclusive dependence on the formal school has to diminish if education is to reach the urban poor or to become meaningful and more useful to all. But in the rural areas, the need to alter this

policy is even greater, almost imperative. It is because of our refusal to adopt non-formal techniques that rural education has so far been utilised only by the well-to-do rural people. It is for the same reason that rural elementary schools have such large rates of non-enrolment or dropouts and elementary education cannot be universalised. Similarly, rural secondary education becomes so counter-productive only because of the exclusive dependence on the formal system. All these deficiencies can be removed, the costs of education reduced, and the effectiveness of education as well as the involvement of the local people can be considerably increased if non-formal education (with all its potential to integrate education and development) is adopted on a large scale. This is another basic decision that can bring about a sea-change in the present situation.

### Adult Education

Let us see how these two basic decisions can change the delivery of education at various stages.

The major reform in rural education here would be to give the highest priority to adult education which has been almost completely neglected so far. It is necessary that rural life should improve quickly and comprehensively. But this is not possible unless we begin to work with adults. The programmes, however, should not be restricted to literacy but should include conscientisation and organisation of the people's thought and action around the possible solution of their day-to-day problems. In other words, adult education should be conducted as a programme of non-formal education almost equivalent to an attack on poverty and ill-health. Proper political and developmental education should thus be an integral part of this programme.

### Elementary Education

If elementary education has to be made universal, non-formal education programme will have to be developed for children in the age-group 9-11 and 11-14 who have not gone to schools or dropped out. Since most of these children are working, part-time classes will have to be organised for them at convenient hours. These classes should be run for one or two hours per day. Their

enrolments should be kept small (not more than 20 students), curricula should be specially designed, teaching-learning materials should be specially prepared and made freely available to every student, vacations should be cut down to the minimum, and special methods of teaching (like mastery learning) could be adopted. If this is done, these children will be able to complete the primary course of our - five years in 12-24 months. After that, similar provision should be made to enable them complete the middle school course of three years one to one-and-half years. In short, the entire proposal is based on three main principles: (1) every rural child (age group 6-14) attends school on a whole-time basis if possible and on part-time basis if necessary; (2) the curricula are revised and related to local environment, oriented to development, and specially condensed or the needs of the grown-up children attending non-formal education classes; and (3) all local education resources are fully utilised and an integrated programme of formal and non-formal education is developed in place of the existing exclusive dependence on the formal school so that all available local teaching resources are fully utilised.

### Secondary Education

Our programmes of secondary education are very weak; they only fit a student to enter the college and almost unfit him for everything else. That is why rural secondary education is creating such serious problems. A boy who has completed the elementary school is still able to adjust himself to rural life. But a boy who has received secondary education is unable to adjust himself to rural life and if he does not go to college or get a job (this now happens in a large majority of cases), he just does not know what to do. If he were to go to college he becomes an even greater problem if he does not get a job. The most difficult but basic issue therefore is to reform rural secondary education which has today become dysfunctional in the rural areas as it is only a counter part of the urban model. It is also costlier and less efficient than urban secondary education. This also is an area where little thinking has been done and hardly any experimentation has been attempted. A two-pronged attack is, therefore, urgently called for: (1) steps have to be taken to reform formal secondary education and to adjust it to rural needs; and (2) a major programme of non-formal

secondary education, especially designed for rural areas has to be launched. This programme would be a mix of a formal school, a part-time education activity, a youth club, and a preparation for specific roles in life. It will have a special value in helping children who have completed elementary education to adjust to their responsibilities in rural life.

### Pre-School Education

Pre-school education in India is mostly an urban affair. It is in private hands and is mainly availed of by the well-to-do parents who can afford to pay fees. The State runs or assists a few pre-schools in the rural areas or for the urban poor. But the coverage of the entire programme is less than 5 per cent of the population of the age-group.

On the existing model of pre-schools which are expected to be managed by trained, matriculate, all-time teachers, the costs per pupil become so high that on the basis of this model, it will never be possible to provide pre-school education to many but a small proportion of rural children. Here also it is necessary to evolve alternative models which can be managed mostly by the local people themselves. These may take several forms. The adult education of rural women built round the care of children will be a great help. The Tamil Nadu experiment is another alternative where educated local women are given a small allowance and trained and assisted to run pre-schools. Its costs are low and the quality is good. The experiments of Anganwadi conducted by Tarabai Modak and Anutai Wagh at Kosbad in Maharashtra State contain many other potential ideas for building new paths. Several other variations would be possible in this area of educational change.

### Higher Education

The demand to start colleges in the villages or rural areas has to be discouraged as these will always be more costly and less efficient. Instead, it will be worthwhile to launch a major systematic programme of talent search in the rural areas and to assist all talented children to study in good secondary schools (on the lines of the rural talent search schemes) and in institutions of higher education, provided with hostels wherever necessary.

The idea of developing rural universities or special institutions of higher education meant for the rural areas was put forward by the Radhakrishnan Commission (1949). The Rural Institutes set up to implement this recommendation have not, by and large, yielded the expected results. But the Lok Bharati as has in a way, succeeded and there is no reason why some rural institutes should not be started to prepare a cadre of workers for developing the rural areas. In addition, we must make an effort to interest colleges and university departments to organise extension programmes for the rural areas and to link studies at the undergraduate and post-graduate stages to rural development. Interesting programmes are being tried out at the Bombay University and the Indian Institute of Science. These need to be further diversified and extended to cover so many institutions of higher education more meaningfully and create a band of young workers with personally achieved insights in the rural problems and commitment to rural development.

#### **Wanted: A Programme of Action-Research**

If rural education is to be revitalised on the above lines, the most urgent need is to launch a large number of action-research programmes to try out these ideas. Here is an immense scope for educationists and educational and social science research institutes. They should accept the challenge and strive to rise to the occasion. The financial implications - at least of research at the pilot stage - would not be too big and the Union and State government must come forward unhesitatingly to underwrite them. One last point, in rural work, we have so far separated education from development: the educational institutions do not touch development and the organisations which deal with development do not touch education. It is highly wasteful to run education and development as parallel streams and at least in rural areas, we should be able to integrate them. This, in itself, poses a major challenge which we will have to tackle on a priority basis. As a first step, educational institutions should take up developmental activities; and institutions engaged in development should start educational activities, at least of the non-formal type.

---

## 16

---

### **Relevance of Education to Development: The Rural Context (1983)\***

---

The relationship of education to development has been greatly emphasized and examined in considerable depth in the last three decades because 'development' itself has been the priority object of people all over the world, and especially in the so-called developing nations. Quite obviously, the analysis depends upon our concepts of 'education' as well as of 'development'.

#### **THE DEVELOPED NATIONS**

An extremely significant event in human history is the emergence of a few developed nations, during the last three hundred years, as a consequence of the growth of modern science and technology which gave them a far deeper understanding of the resources and forces of Nature than man ever had and thereby endowed them with unprecedented power to manipulate Nature and to produce an apparently unlimited quantity and variety of goods and services. This understanding of Nature and capacity to manipulate it would have had only beneficial results and improved the quality of life of all individuals if they had been subject to a moral order and used with an eye to the long term interests of mankind. But unfortunately they were regarded as a law unto themselves and were used mainly for their immediate benefits in utter disregard of their long term consequences on the environment, man or society. What is worse, this great power was captured by two forces—militarism and private-profit-oriented capitalism—which exploited it to serve their own narrow ends.

---

\**Education and the New International Order*, 1983

'Development' therefore came to be defined within this new context and meant military power based on increasingly deadlier weapons of destruction and the capacity to produce unlimited goods and services through uncontrolled industrialisation. The more a country had of these two powers which are obviously interrelated, the more developed it was supposed to be.

This philosophy of development necessarily implied revolutionary changes in values, in organisation of work, in social structures and functioning, in the nature of skills and attitudes required of individuals and generally in the lifestyles of people. For instance, the pursuit of knowledge, especially of science and technology, assumed immense significance and received heavy investments in man, money and materials. The emphasis on the 'hereafter', so characteristic of the pre-industrial world, gave place to an emphasis on the 'here and now'. The quality of life was confused with the standard of living or mere consumption of goods and services so that the earlier concepts of self-control or simplicity of life were abandoned and replaced by the theory of unlimited human wants (which could and should be fanned to the utmost by advertisement and propaganda) and consumerism. Nature came to be regarded as inexhaustible and its utmost exploitation became a sacred duty. Production ceased to be centred around articles of personal and family use and was directed towards commodities intended for the market. Work also went out of the home and became centred in large factories so that children became almost irrelevant or useless for production.

Moreover, work also lost its intrinsic interest because it came to be restricted to simple, repetitive acts of drudgery and men had, therefore, to be induced to work for other ulterior considerations. The rapid stride of industrialisation further led to an equally rapid growth of towns and cities with all the consequent changes in lifestyles. Industrialisation also meant economic centralisation which, in its turn, led to political and social centralisation and reduced the autonomy of each individual. What is even worse, the desire to create and capture markets for the growing products of the industrialised countries (or to secure the needed raw materials for them) led to conquests and colonisation of the non-developed world and to the infliction of untold misery on their peoples. In retrospect, all these appear as immense disadvantages or almost

catastrophic events. But they were hardly noticed at that time (except by some philosophic thinkers whose voice remained unheard) and blinded by the power, wealth, and abundance of luxury goods produced by modern industry, people came to regard the industrial era as the golden age in the history of mankind, to equate industrialisation with development, and to look upon the highly industrialised, rich and militarily powerful nations as the developed countries.

In the shadow of this industrial development, the modern educational system was slowly but relentlessly shaped during the last three hundred years. Above all, the industrial civilisation needed four main things for its survival and success: (1) a continuous expansion of the knowledge base in science and technology; (2) a small but competent class of managers or entrepreneurs who could organise industrial production and provide the allied services; (3) a large manipulable labour force which is prepared to do any kind of dull, repetitive or uninteresting work for an ulterior consideration like wages; and (4) a population addicted to consumerism which then becomes an inexhaustible market. The educational systems of the industrialised countries tried to meet all those requirements to the full. The study of science and technology and the training of professionals which had no place in higher education in the pre-industrial world, was now admitted in the new system of higher education, given a great place of honour and provided with large resources on a priority basis. In fact, the overall investments in research and science and technology have been so large that today, scientific knowledge doubles every 10 years or there about. Adequate steps have thus been taken to ensure that modern society does not lack the knowledge base it needs, and that it alone has the essential competent class of managers and entrepreneurs. The industrial society also introduced a system of universal education for children who no longer had any work to do and provided vocational and technical education on a large scale as a part of the formal education system. It thus ensured the availability of a large band of trained labour force having the needed information and skills. Finally, the education system also tried to spread among the general population values and attitudes which were broadly supportive of the new mode of production. For instance, consumerism was inculcated as a value and every

educated individual became a better buyer of the goods and services produced in the industrial civilisation. The very process of education where children and young people were grouped together and put through common pre-planned steps in learning under the dominant authority of the teacher resembled a factory mode of production and cultivated the values expected of the labour force such as discipline, obedience, and willingness to do uninteresting and even boring work for ulterior considerations like examination marks. With all such steps taken, it is hardly a matter for surprise that social scientists found that the formal system of education in the developed nations makes a material contribution to 'development' as identified by the growth of GNP. In fact, one finds a close and mutually supporting relationship established between education and productivity or development in these countries: the spread of education led to an increase of productivity or GNP and an increase in GNP made larger revenues available for further investment in education.

This concept of development as well as of education has, however, run into serious trouble at the moment. The third world has awakened and has become politically free so that it is no longer easy to continue to exploit it. Industrialisation itself has run into severe problems because of the alienation of workers and the increasingly acute problems of pollution. The pursuit of military might has brought the world to a point where the very survival of man has been jeopardised. Consumerism has begun to yield diminishing returns. The people have begun to realise that the quality of life is not the same thing as the standards of living and that even in the rich industrialised countries, the plenty without is hardly a compensation for the lack of peace within. The attacks against the educational system have been equally severe and we have all kinds of proposals for radical reform, including the idea of de-schooling society. One does not see exactly how this recent upsurge of radical ideas will be translated into practice and how we shall have 'another' development and a related 'new' system of education. But one thing is certain: the old concept that one can solve the problems created by industrialisation and high technology by still further industrialisation or still higher technology (or solve the problems of education by a further expansion of the educational system) is dead and buried. The need of an alternative, both in education and development, has been

accepted and the search for it is on. We must discover and operationalise it if man is to survive and if life is to have some meaning.

### THE DEVELOPING NATIONS

Prior to World War II, most of the 'developing' nations of today were either colonies or empires of the developed countries. They had been introduced to the modern industrial civilisation, mainly to help the development of their ruling powers than their own. After the second World War, they became politically independent and launched programmes of 'development' which simply meant that they accepted consumerism as a basic value, equated quality of life with mere standards of living, and wanted to imitate the developed countries and be rich, industrialised and militarily powerful. In this endeavour they received assistance and support from the UN agencies and also from the developed countries on a bilateral basis.

It did not take these developing countries long to discover that 'development' as understood by the developed nations or modernisation and industrialisation was not merely coexistent but had also some sort of causal relationship and that industrialisation was not merely a matter of setting up factories and buying technologies but that it also had far-reaching implications regarding changes in values and skills of the people which could be brought about through education. In fact, they even over-emphasized the role of education in 'development' and assumed that they had only to create an educational system similar to that of the developed countries to become like them: industrialised, rich and militarily powerful. Hence they launched both the programmes simultaneously: to industrialise themselves with borrowed technology, capital and even personnel; and to plan their formal educational systems on the models of the developed nations.

Looking back at the scene after about three decades of endeavour on these lines, one is pained (though not exactly surprised) to discover that both these programmes have failed. The developing countries have not been able to be militarily powerful, in spite of all their expenditure on armaments, because they depend on borrowed technology and purchase of arms from

the developed nations. They do not have adequate indigenous capability to be self-sufficient in defence, most of them cannot even build it up, and none of them can compete with the developed countries that have far vaster resources and had a great head-start. Of course, the absurd point is that even if they become militarily powerful, they will have nothing to defend except their own backwardness. The same difficulties arise in industrialisation as well. The multinationals succeed in blocking the genuine development of the third world although they pretend to promote it. The developing countries have mostly to depend on borrowed technology which is unsuitable to their facts or endowments. They have no overseas colonies to which they can export their poverty or proletariat; and being new-comers in the field, they have several inherent handicaps which more than outweigh the advantages of the situation. The progress of their industrialisation has, therefore, been slow, painful and halting. In education also, the picture is no better. These countries are trying to adopt an alien educational system which has no roots in their soil. The attempt does not succeed because their resources are very inadequate and the socio-economic conditions are very different. They are unable to liquidate illiteracy or even to make elementary education universal. On the other hand, they have over expanded their systems of secondary and higher education to such an extent that the educated unemployed have become a serious social problem. All that has happened as a result of this effort at imitative industrialisation and educational reconstruction (or 'modernisation' as it is often called) is to create a small Western-educated elite which identifies itself with the elite in the developed countries, is alienated from its own countrymen, and maintains comparatively high standards of living by exploiting the common people who are poor, illiterate and unhealthy. Consequently, the severe inequalities between nations are reproduced within the developing nations; and the situation becomes increasingly explosive because the gap between the capacity of these countries to produce goods and services and the demands of the people increasingly addicted to consumerism (which they have borrowed from the developed countries) continues to widen. All things considered, the fate of these developing countries seems to be as pitiable as that of the frog in Aesop's fable who wanted to inflate himself to the size of the bull

he saw. The attempt is not likely to succeed; and even if it does, it is hardly worthwhile.

### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

How do these problems of education and development affect the rural areas? The situation varies in the developed and developing nations.

Industrialisation is essentially an urbanising force; and as countries have become highly industrialised (as USA), they have also become highly urbanised in the sense that a vast bulk of their population has come to live in cities and towns. The population in rural areas has been reduced to very small proportions; and even in the small communities that their villages are, all modern amenities like roads, medical care, schools, shops, etc. are provided so that the difference between urban and rural areas is reduced to the minimal. The rural problem in such cases has very little significance. In fact, in these countries, the rural areas hardly present any difficult problem. If there is a problem at all, it is in the squalor and crime of urban areas.

In the developing countries, however, the situation is entirely different. Here the colonial or imperial powers that ruled once had a simple policy to follow: they attempted modernisation or industrialisation of these countries in two phases:

- 1) Modernise and industrialise a few urban centres which would then look like small patches of the developed nations planted as 'islands' in a sea of undeveloped, rural areas; and then
- 2) Urbanise the rural areas.

In implementing the first stage of this policy, vast resources of all kinds were sunk in a few urban centres which prospered and began to look like the developed nations because of their industry, modern buildings, transport facilities, water supply and drainage services, modern educational and medical facilities, and so on. All this of course implied that the urban areas prospered at the cost of the rural areas or by exploiting them so that they became, not healthy growths but tumours of ill-health in the social body. But when it came to the second style of urbanising or developing the rural areas, the resources ran out and even to this day, most rural

areas are primitive, seriously lacking in amenities like roads, safe water supply and drainage, electricity, or medical and educational services. A tremendous disparity has thus grown between urban and rural areas, similar to that between the developed and developing nations. The urban areas also continue to exploit the rural areas as the developed countries exploit the developing areas.

A tale of similar disparities and exploitation is seen in the educational field as well. By and large, education in the rural areas began much later than that in urban areas. Because of their large population size, urban areas generally have facilities for education at all stages including the university. But in the rural areas, sometimes there is no educational facility at all; and in most of them, there is only an elementary school. Some villages have secondary schools and a few may even have colleges. But taken all-in-all, the provision of school facilities in the rural areas still continues to be far too inadequate in comparison with that in the urban areas. The quality of rural education is also poor because of low standards of buildings and equipment and especially because good teachers prefer to work in the urban and rural education, the programme of rural education may be described as that of urban education conducted with greater inefficiency.

### WHAT NEXT?

Where do we go from here? The creation of a New International Economic Order is being talked about. It implies the lessening of inequalities between and within nations. This further implies that the domination of the world situation by a few developed countries must end and that the domination by the elites within their national situations should also end and that the domination by the urban over the rural areas should finally disappear. The methods to be adopted to achieve these objectives will obviously depend upon our understanding and acknowledgement of the main factors which are responsible for the present unhappy situation of inequality.

The preceding discussion has shown that the existing inequalities between nations arise essentially from the concepts of 'development' and 'education' that grew up in the western world over the last three hundred years; and consequently it is not

possible to reduce these inequalities unless these concepts are abandoned and replaced by those of 'another' development (based on a different view of our relationship to nature and the use of technology) and 'another' type of education. It is also clear that these same concepts lead to the creation of an exploiting elite **within** the developing nations (which lives on the surplus it draws from the toiling masses) and create inequalities between different social groups within these nations. It is again the same concepts that create the inequalities and exploitative relationship between the urban and rural areas. The basic cause of all these different symptoms of the illness of inequalities is the same; and it is this which we must attack. In other words, we must think of 'another' development based on living in harmony with Nature rather than on its exploitation, place a premium on the true quality of life rather than on consumerism, and develop alternative technologies which will reduce pollution, generate greater employment and cause less alienation. This is the basic and radical change that all our nations need. If it is brought about, the New International Economic Order may become possible, may draw nearer. In that event inequalities between and within nations (as well as those between the urban and rural areas) will decrease and corresponding educational changes will follow.

But it has to be clearly admitted that the transformation of the international economic order is essentially a political task. Education can play an important but only a secondary role in this endeavour. The relationship between education and society is dialectical: social change is necessarily reflected in education and educational changes can prepare the ground for, consolidate and complete social changes. Moreover, it will never be possible for any educational system to remain a silent spectator of the social and economic transformation going on in the world currently or that which would take place in the world in the near future. Education does have a positive role to play in the creation of a more ethical international economic order which visualises greater equality between and within nations. In this regard, the following four points emerge as feasible areas of educational action:

- 1) The education system can promote a world wide debate on the new social order that is needed by humanity, the causes of the present inegalitarian order, the manner in which this

can be altered and the large scale research programme that is necessary to clarify ideas on this subject. This is a contribution which the education system, particularly the teachers, can make.

- 2) It is necessary to involve students also in this debate: after all, they are more affected by the world of tomorrow. We should, therefore, involve the students in a discussion in depth about the new world order that we want and how we can strive for its creation.
- 3) The education system should play a role in creating a strong public opinion in favour of a new international economic order.
- 4) The education system should avoid inegalitarian tendencies and promote egalitarian tendencies. For instance, universal elementary education is an egalitarian programme and should be strongly supported. The expansion of higher education is definitely inegalitarian and deserves to be controlled. The separation of the brain from the hand or manual work from intellectual education is inegalitarian, whereas the combination of manual and intellectual work is egalitarian. In other words, educationists should be able to identify educational programmes which are egalitarian or inegalitarian and support the former and contain the latter.

Seriously considered and practised, these actions could help intermerge new political and educational streams into 'another development' which essentially implies a new international economic order, a situation in which education and development acquire an unbreakable inter-dependence, a natural state of mutual support.

---

## Index

---

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Absenteeism, 108                                | Cynicism, 67                                    |
| Administrative planning, 10                     | Development, philosophy of, 238                 |
| Anti-illiteracy campaign, 58                    | Dysfunctional primary school, 39, 43            |
| Apprenticeship systems, 65                      | Economic centralisation, 238                    |
| Apprenticeship training, 56                     | Education, democratisation of, 71               |
| Apprenticeship, form of, 67                     | Education, modern system of, 25                 |
| Ashrams, 189                                    | Educative propaganda, 10                        |
| Autonomous colleges, 144                        | Egalitarian programme, 246                      |
| Better-equipped schools, 21                     | Elementary education, 28                        |
| Bombay Primary Education Rules, 22              | Elementary education, traditional system of, 32 |
| Book-centred instruction, 36                    | Entrance examination, 143                       |
| Central Advisory Board of Education, 158        | Ethical international economic order, 245       |
| Centralised legal system, 222                   | Experimental World Literacy Programme, 58       |
| Circle system, 88                               | Family life education, 83                       |
| Communication, channel of, 78                   | Family planning programme, 78                   |
| Communication, cultural forms of, 65            | Fee-loans, system of, 141                       |
| Compulsory attendance, 19                       | Formal academic qualification, 63               |
| Compulsory Education Act, 23                    | Free educational equipment, 41                  |
| Compulsory schooling, 38                        | Full-fledged primary schools, 13                |
| Compulsory subsidy, 134                         | Full-time institutional instruction, 45, 49     |
| Computer automation, 54                         | Full-time paid public servant, 37               |
| Consumerism, 239                                | Functional literacy, 77                         |
| Consumerism, philosophy of, 228                 |   |
| Conventional vocational training programmes, 68 |   |
| Cultural programmes, 21                         |   |



- Gandhi, Mahatma, 34  
 Gardiner, Rebert, 74  
 Gopaldaswamy R.A., 138  
 Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 105  
 Gram Sewak training centres, 80  
 Hartog Committee, 9  
 Heartless system, 46  
 Hygienic habits, 55  
 Idealism, 96  
 Indian Community Development Programme, 68  
 Indian Education Commission, 28, 91  
 Indigenous schools, 27  
 Individual rebellion, 69  
 Industrial Training Institutes, 80  
 Inspectorial examination, 35  
 Integrated rural development programmes, 57  
 Interdisciplinary research, 62  
 International Commission on Education, 50  
 Judicial self-sufficiency, 222  
 Learning, multimedia of, 52  
 Lifelong education, system of, 50  
 Mass education, programmes of, 38  
 Microscopic minority, 99, 195  
 Middle-class-oriented system, 123  
 Minimum statutory contribution, 24  
 Modern agricultural techniques, 56  
 Modern education system, 222  
 Modern industrial civilisation, 241  
 Mudaliar Committee, 138  
 Multi-teacher school, 14  
 Naoroji, Dadabhai, 120  
 Non-formal education programme, 233  
 Non-formal education programmes, 61, 66  
 On-the-job training, 57, 75  
 Open-door policy, 130  
 Panchayat Samiti, 20  
 Parent-Teacher Associations, 19  
 Part-time programme, 78  
 Payment, system of, 35  
 Post-independence programme, 227  
 Primary education, universalisation of, 41  
 Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination, 45  
 Private single-teacher schools, 16  
 Private-profit-oriented capitalism, 237  
 Provision, quantitative equality of, 190  
 Remunerative employment opportunities, 195  
 Revolutionary educational philosophy, 34  
 Rural education, organised system of, 196  
 Rural education, system of, 191  
 School health programme, 116  
 Second Five-Year Plans, 3  
 Semi-educated group, 177  
 Shift system, 15  
 Single-teacher institutions, 14  
 Small-sized classes, 114  
 Social education programme, 20  
 Social Education, 174  
 Special coaching programmes, 40  
 Sponsor day-care centres, 55  
 Teacher training institutions, 56  
 Teaching, methods of, 35  
 Total education system, 52  
 Triple-benefit scheme, 101  
 Universal education, programme of, 124  
 University Grants Commission, 158, 159  
 Vernacular schools, 25  
 Vicious dual system, 131  
 Village Panchayats, 19  
 Village School Committee, 24  
 Vocational Education, 178  
 Vocational training programmes, 138  
 Western science, knowledge of, 25  
 Zamindars, 87